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The Beaver

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The Pirates of Newfoundland

Poet Among the Indians

A Province in Flames

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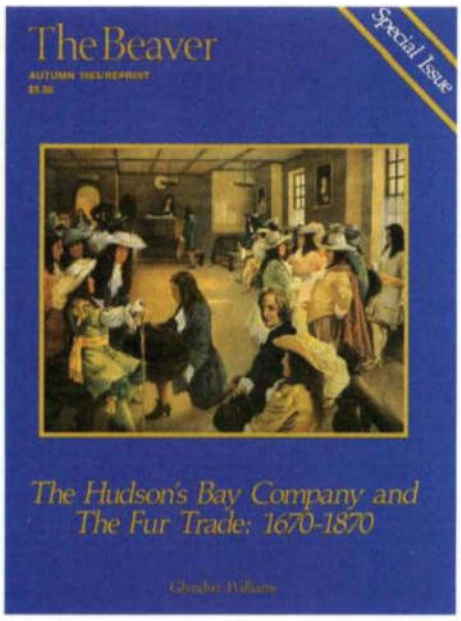

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By GLYNDWR WILLIAMS

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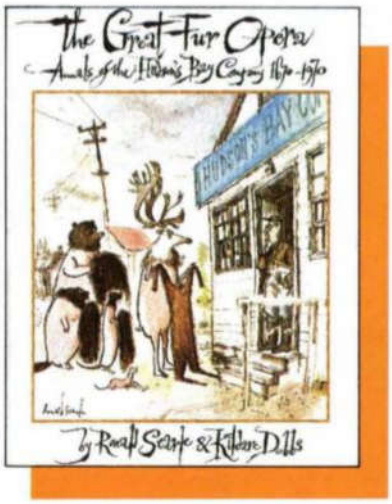

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August/September 1988
Vol. 68:4
Issued July 1988
$3.50

Editor:
Christopher Dafoe
Managing Editor:
Carol Preston

Advertising Representative:
Sandra Waller
496 Cranbrooke Ave.,
North York, Ontario,
M5M 1N7
(416) 782-7401.

Advisory Board:
Shirlee A. Smith
Michael Bliss
William Nobleman
Rolph Huband

Cover:
The Battle in the Bay
By Norman Wilkinson.

THE BEAVER: Exploring Canada's History (ISSN 0005-7517) is published bi-monthly by The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay, known as the Hudson's Bay Company, 450 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0E7, Canada. (204) 786-7048.

U.S. MAILING ADDRESS: THE BEAVER Magazine, c/o H.A. & J.L. Wood, Inc., Box 329, Pembina, North Dakota 58271-0329.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION: (6 issues) $18 (Canada and United States). SINGLE COPY $3.50. OTHER COUNTRIES ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION $24.

SECOND-CLASS MAIL REGISTRATION NUMBER: 1401.

CANADIAN POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEAVER Magazine, 450 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0E7.

U.S. SECOND-CLASS MAIL REGISTRATION NUMBER: USPS 759-610.

U.S. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE BEAVER Magazine, c/o H.A. & J.L. Wood, Inc., Box 329, Pembina, North Dakota 58271-0329.

Second class postage paid at Winnipeg and at additional mailing office.

While every care will be taken of manuscripts and illustrations submitted, no liability will be assumed for loss.

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PRINTED IN CANADA

The Beaver

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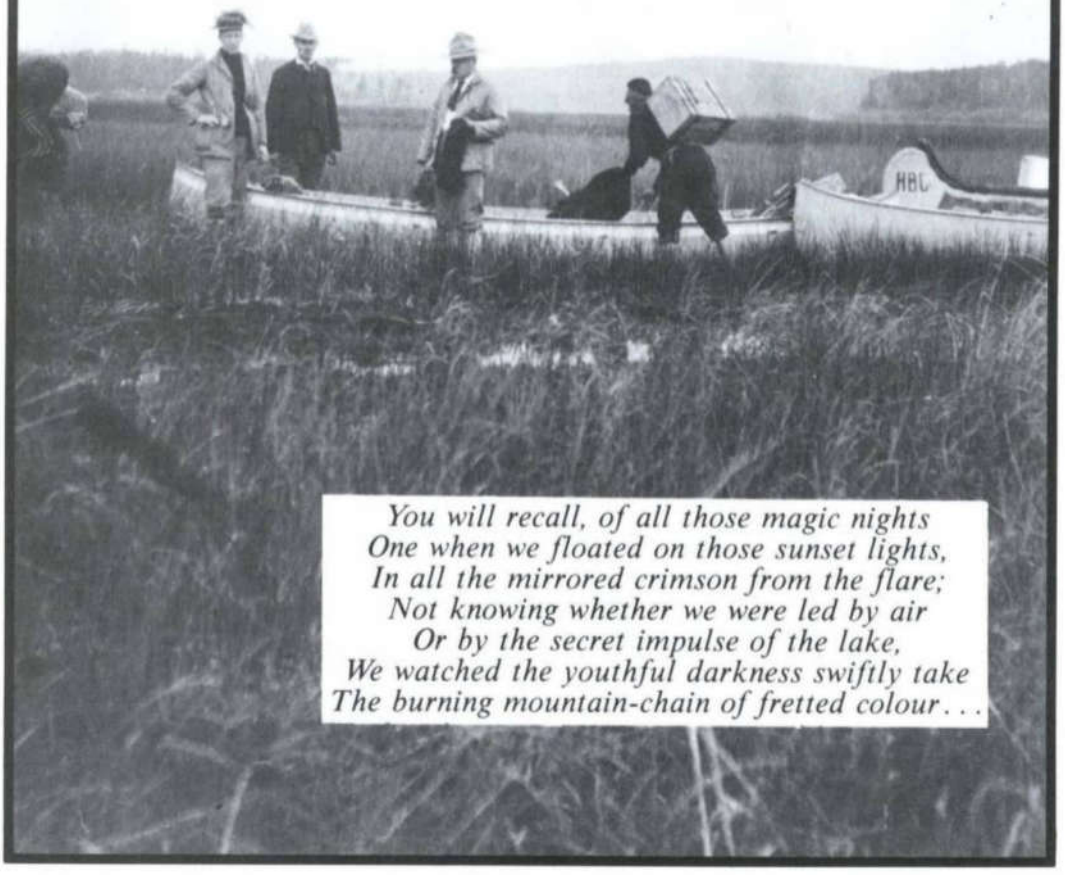
THE POET AND THE INDIANS

Duncan Campbell Scott Woos the Muse And Negotiates Treaty Number Nine

By JAMES MORRISON



You will recall, of all those magic nights
One when we floated on those sunset lights,
In all the mirrored crimson from the flare;
Not knowing whether we were led by air
Or by the secret impulse of the lake,
We watched the youthful darkness swiftly take
The burning mountain-chain of fretted colour. . .

Duncan Campbell Scott sent the final draft of "The Fragment of a Letter" to his good friend Pelham Edgar, a professor at Toronto's Victoria College, in reminder of a canoe trip they had shared through Northern Ontario. Like countless travellers before and since, they had both been moved by the spectacular beauty of the Canadian wilderness. "The poet read me his poem which is dedicated to me", Edgar wrote from Abitibi Post in June of 1906. "It is in his best vein, drenched with nature and full of passion .... In the evening we had a lazy drift in a canoe. The colours were superb. There had been a brisk wind all day which died with sunset, and as we floated the swells were lapping melodiously on all the island shores. Beautiful it was, too, as we turned our reluctant prow campward, to see the red fires glowing on the shore".

What these lyrical memories do not reveal is the reason for this particular canoe trip, which occupied the summers of 1905 and 1906. Forty-four year old Duncan Campbell Scott, a career civil servant in the Department of Indian Affairs, had come north to negotiate a treaty with the Ojibwa and Cree Indians. This would be the ninth such agreement since 1867. Canadian government practice conformed to a 1763 Proclamation of King George III, which had required British colonies to purchase lands from their Indian proprietors before proceeding with settlement. "The treaty policy so well established when the confederation of the provinces of British North America took place", Scott informed the readers of *Scribner's* magazine a year later, "has since been continued and nearly all civilized Canada is covered with these Indian treaties and surrenders". He continued:

> Until lately, however, the map would have shown a large portion of the province of Ontario uncovered by the treaty blanket. Extending north of the watershed that divides the streams flowing into Lakes Huron and Superior from those flowing into Hudson Bay, it reached James Bay on the north and the long curled ribbon of the Albany River, and comprised an area of 90,000 square miles, nearly twice as large as the State of New York.

On the second day of July 1905 the Treaty Nine commissioners — the others being Scott's Indian Department colleague Samuel Stewart, and Daniel McMartin, a lawyer from Perth who was representing Ontario — had arrived by train at Dinorwic accompanied by a physician, A.G. Meindl, and by two Dominion police constables, James Parkinson and Joseph Louis Vanasse. They were met by Chief Trader T.C. Rae, who had been delegated by the Hudson's Bay Company to accompany the expedition, and by a crack crew of Albany River guides headed by Jimmy Swain — to Scott a "fine type of the old half-breed race of packers and voyageurs which is fast disappearing". Jimmy was famous for his portaging speed and strength; now sixty-seven, he had once been capable of snowshoeing with the mail from Moose Factory to Michipicoten, a distance of 800 kilometres, in six days. Over the course of the summer, the crew of half-breeds and Indians — which changed at Albany and Moose Factory — would number as many as seventeen. To Duncan Scott, they were all colourful; he would particularly remember David Sugarhead "who had only one lung and worked as if he had four", and the bowsman Oombash, "the dandy of the party", who wore a magenta and blue sweater and always paddled in a pair of black woollen gloves. With such expert help, the treaty party set off on the morning of 3 July for Osnaburgh House, at the head of the Albany River, in three large canoes, their luggage including thirty thousand dollars in small bills, flags and medals for the chiefs, medical supplies — and a large unwieldy camera.

Though his subjects were simple hunters and trappers, not the warlike tribes of the west coast and plains captured so romantically by Edward Curtis, Duncan Scott's photographs of the northern Cree and Ojibwa are wonderfully evocative in their own quiet way. Here is a group of Indian men at Fort Hope, the Christians with cropped hair, the traditionalists distinguishable by their flowing locks. Here is a family in its tent at Abitibi post, a brand new sewing machine clearly visible in the background. And here is Chief Louis Espagnol of Biscotasing, looking "quite the heavy swell" in front of the Hudson's Bay Company store. It is not surprising that the poet included photography in his repertoire of skills. Scott was interested in all the arts, and gatherings at his Ottawa home were as likely to include musicians and painters as well as fellow writers. He was also very successful at blending his private and public lives. "Indian Affairs was not one of the Government's more exacting departments", his friend Madge Macbeth later remembered, so "Duncan had quite a little leisure during office hours. He did not suppress his artistic impulses at these times, but worked zealously on his practice piano".

That sense of priorities had its effect on the treaty party itself. The commissioners had realized by late August of 1905 that they would require a second summer to complete their work — so Scott took advantage of the intervening winter to change the composition of the 1906 expedition. He brought along Henry Dunneth, the athletic son of an Ottawa friend, as an extra paddler; and he hired Pelham Edgar, then thirty-five, as commission secretary. Professor Edgar witnessed the happy effect on his friend's literary muse. "We have the Oxford Book of Poetry always handy", he

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The treaty party, 1906: (Back row) Arthur Meindl, Duncan Campbell Scott, Pelham Edgar, Edmund Morris. (Front) Samuel Stewart, Daniel McMartin, Harry Black (cook), Henry Dunneth.

noted one warm summer afternoon, "and when I paddle Duncan often reads . . . Duncan caught a poem as we were going through Island Lake and is still reeling it in. I have not yet seen it. This morning he read two splendid stories to me that he has written lately". Scott had also invited the painter Edmund Morris, son of the Manitoba Lieutenant-Governor who had negotiated several earlier Indian Treaties in Western Canada to join them for the latter part of the 1906 treaty tour. "The now familiar appearances of an Indian encampment took on a quite novel aspect for us when seen in the company of an artist whose eye was alert to seize every nuance of new suggestion". Thus Pelham Edgar remembered "Eddie" Morris's arrival at Chapleau. "We used to stroll among the tents and wigwams in the evening light, and catch innumerable hints of colour and characteristic attitudes — the gleam of the fire through the opened folds of a wigwam, and the yearning face of a blind woman crouched beside the bubbling pot. Under a rude strip of sailcloth which cannot shelter her from the wind or driving rain a tattered crone squats on her rabbit-skin patching a moccasin". The artist produced several charcoal pastels of the Ojibwa of Chapleau, Missinaibi and Long Lake, which are now at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. When Morris drowned a few years later, Scott recreated their times together in the heartfelt "Lines in Memory of Edmund Morris":

How often we have risen without daylight
When the day star was hidden in mist
When the dragon-fly was heavy with dew and sleep
And viewed the miracle pre-eminent, matchless,
The prelusive light that quickens the morning,
When you steal upon a land that man has not sullied with his intrusion
When the aboriginal shy dwellers in the broad solitudes
Are asleep in their innumerable dens and night haunts
Amid the dry ferns, in the tender nests
Pressed into shape by the breasts of the Mother birds? . . .

Even the photographs confirm that Scott, who was reserved and fastidious by nature, had relaxed considerably during his second summer in the North. In pictures taken the previous year, he invariably looks uncomfortable, whether crossing a portage in pith helmet and mosquito net, or posing formally with his colleagues in front of the expedition's tents. But the camaraderie of the camp seems to have worked its magic — in Pelham Edgar's words, "the drifting, pungent smoke, the many flies, the cool plunge in the lake or river, the Gargantuan meal, the pipe which refreshes". By late July of 1906, the members of the

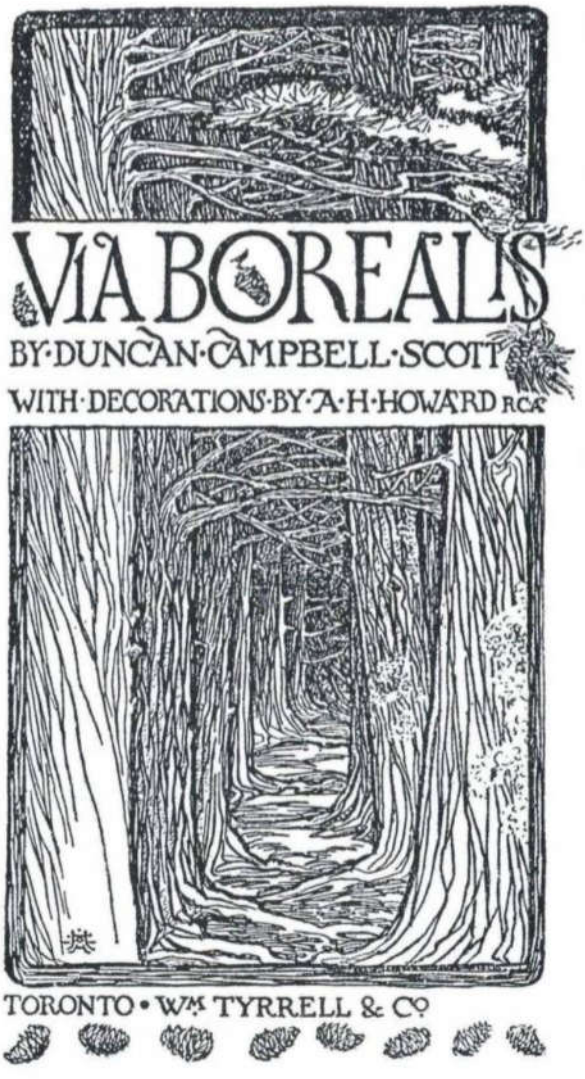
official party are just another group of Edwardian sportsmen, enjoying a late afternoon by the shores of Missinaibi Lake. Scott himself is sporting a kerchief and a brand new moustache.

It is this element of self-consciousness which makes the Treaty Nine expedition so unusual. Records of other agreements with native people in Western and Northern Canada survive mainly in the bureaucratic prose of the commissioners. Though Duncan Scott and his colleagues certainly produced an official report, Scott not only wrote poetry — one slim volume, *Via Borealis*, the specific product of the expedition, plus several later poems which took their inspiration from the trip — but also kept a diary, and reported on his travels for *Scribner's*. Commissioner Samuel Stewart, who seems to have had no particular literary pretensions, maintained a very entertaining journal of his own. Pelham Edgar, who spent a great deal of time fishing — "the Indians had two long names for me, one of which translated means 'The man who always asks where the trout are' and the other 'The man who always fishes and never catches anything' " — contributed several articles about the 1906 treaty to a long-defunct periodical called *Canada*. And Edgar even persuaded Police Constable Joseph-Louis Vanasse to write for the same magazine about the Indian customs he had witnessed at Lac Seul in 1905.

Yet for all their verbal superiority, it is surprising how conventional the treaty party's views turn out to be. Unlike the geologist-explorer Robert Bell, an older contemporary who developed an ethnologist's sensitivity to native culture during his years in the North, Duncan Scott and his colleagues generally reveal themselves as late Victorian middle-class moralists. Though Scott had lost his own faith, his upbringing as the son of a Methodist missionary to the Indians on Lake Huron had left its mark — as in the poem "Night Hymns on Lake Nipigon", which he had written after an earlier northern journey in 1899:

> Sing we the sacred ancient hymns of the churches,
> Chanted first in old-world nooks of the desert,
> While in the wild, pellucid Nipigon reaches
> Hunted the savage.
>
> Now have the ages met in the Northern midnight,
> And on the lonely, loon-haunted Nipigon reaches
> Rises the hymn of triumph and courage and
> comfort,
> Adeste Fideles.
>
> Tones that were fashioned when the faith brooded
> in darkness
> Joined with sonorous vowels in the noble Latin,
> Now are married with the long-drawn Ojibwa,
> Uncouth and mournful . . .

Cleanliness and godliness were the prime virtues to be imparted to the Indians. "There is no romance about the ordinary attire of our North Country Indians", Pelham Edgar advised the readers of the illustrated weekly *Canada*. "Waking or sleeping he is dressed like any disreputable white — a dirty flannel shirt, patched trousers, and a shabby felt hat which he generally removes when he goes to bed. Moccasins or shoepacks mark the most important difference, and he has usually about his waist a Hudson's Bay sash and about his neck a coloured handkerchief". At Mattagami Post, however, the Ojibwa treated with "were well dressed and appeared to be living comfortably. A degree of unusual cleanliness was to be observed in their surroundings and habits". The credit in this case, Edgar believed, belonged to James Miller, the Hudson's Bay Company trader — "a tawny-bearded Scot well advanced in years" who, after fifty years in the northern interior, "desires no more civilization than a week of deep potation once a year at Biscotasing with his



old crony, Macleod, of Flying Post". The commissioners later met Alex Macleod when, on a Sunday in mid-July, they visited his post at the head of the Groundhog River. Surprised that there were none of the welcoming ceremonies which had greeted them elsewhere, they discovered that Macleod had taught the Indians to observe the Sabbath so strictly that they would not even fire their rifles.

Along the James Bay coast, both the Roman Catholic and Anglican clergy were given unstinting praise. Duncan Scott took pleasure in noting the effect that contact with "a few of the better elements of our civilization" had had. "There was a certain degree of cleanliness in the preparation of food, the Indians were better dressed, and although the fur trade is a sort of slavery, a greater self-reliance was apparent". Scott also found something "primitive and touching" in the devotion of the crew that took the commissioners from Moose Factory to Abitibi. These men "were constant in their vespers and every evening recited a litany, sang a hymn and made a prayer".

On other subjects, the commissioners were not nearly so sanguine. Though the people of Fort Matachewan were nominally Roman Catholic, Samuel Stewart observed that "immorality" was rampant among them; when paying annuities in June of 1906, "we learned that many of the unmarried women had large families for whom they asked to be paid annuities". At Missanabie Station on the CPR, Stewart found that, despite the absence of a hotel or saloon, "the Indians experience no difficulty in getting intoxicants. A favourite drink with them is known as 'John Bull Bitters', which purports to cure almost every known disease". Here, they gave the Indians a lecture on sobriety. And at Lac Seul Post, which the treaty party passed in July of 1905 on their way to the Albany River, they discovered that a "White Dog Feast" was underway. Because such ceremonies were illegal, Commissioner Scott demanded to see the conjurer. After "professing ignorance as to the whereabouts of this important personage", the chief finally located him, and Police Constable Vanasse hoisted the Union Jack and led the official party directly to the conjurer's tent. Neotanaqueb, a short, stoutly built man who "was considered to have a great skill in driving out the evil spirits from those afflicted with any kind of disease" was absolutely unrepentant; he claimed to be acting under instructions from Powassan, the head conjurer of the district, "who would visit him with divers pains and penalties if he neglected to hold these Dog Feasts". The government representatives, Constable Vanasse afterwards recalled, proceeded to warn all the Indians assembled that "they were liable to be arrested and put in jail, and the government could suspend their annual pay", adding that:

> since they had broken the agreements of the treaty, the Government would be justified in doing as much; but our mission was one of peace, and if they would promise faithfully to stop the objectionable practice they would not be molested. If they would come at

Duncan Campbell Scott photographed these native women and children at a treaty feast, Mattagami Post, July 1906.

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The blind chief Missabay speaks of native fears over a possible loss of hunting and fishing rights, Osnaburgh House, 1905.

once to the Hudson's Bay Company's fort, they would receive rations of food and tobacco.

Many years later, Duncan Campbell Scott was only partly apologetic about the Indian Department's role in suppressing traditional ceremonials. "I was never unsympathetic to aboriginal ideals", he informed the critic E.K. Brown in 1941, "but there was the law which I did not originate and which I never tried to amend in the direction of severity. One can hardly be sympathetic with the contemporary Sun-dance or Potlach when one knows that the original spirit has departed and that they are largely the opportunities for debauchery by low white men".

Osnaburgh House was the first official stop on the treaty tour. Because of its close water connection to the Treaty Three reserve at Lac Seul, the commissioners had been afraid that the Indian people here would offer the most "difficulty" over the difference between the terms of the proposed new agreement and the more favourable provisions of the treaty of 1873. Apart from the signing gratuity of $8.00, these Northern groups were only to be offered annuities of $4.00 per head instead of $5.00. And although they too were to be allowed to choose "reserves" of one square mile per family of five, these particular Cree and Ojibwa would not receive items such as tools, agricultural implements, nets, seed-grain, and livestock. Neither would their chiefs and principal men be given salaries and annual suits of clothing. In order to secure Ontario's consent to the new treaty, the federal government had decided to limit its terms to those provided the Ojibwa of the northern shores of Lakes Huron and Superior by the so-called "Robinson" treaties of 1850.

The commissioners need not have worried about their reception. As they disembarked at the Hudson's Bay Company fort on Lake St. Joseph, they were met, Scott noted, by the assembled Ojibwa — who stood in line outside the palisades, the old blind chief Missabay and the other principal men in the centre, the young men on the outskirts, and the women by themselves, "separated as they are always". After the firing of guns and a solemn hand-shaking, the government men asked

Ontario Archives

Chief Andrew Luke hoists the Union Jack, Mattagami Post, July 1906.

the Indian people to select representatives to whom the treaty could be interpreted, and when that was done, told the spokesmen to ask any questions they wanted. "For all this", replied Missabay, "we will have to give up our hunting and live on the land you give us, and how can we live without hunting?" Scott and his colleagues quickly assured the Indians that they were not expected to give up their hunting grounds, "that they might hunt and fish throughout all the country, but that they were to be good subjects of the King, the great father, whose messengers we were". Missabay asked for time to consider, which was immediately granted. When the meeting reconvened the following morning the chief said they were prepared to sign the treaty with His Majesty, "as they believed that nothing but good was intended. The money they would receive would be of great benefit to them and the Indians were all very thankful for the advantages they would receive from the treaty". The chiefs and principal men then signed the agreement with all due formality and the commissioners paid out the $8.00 gratuity to nearly 350 people — which number, Samuel Stewart observed with some astonishment, included one particular Indian "his three wives and seventeen children". Just before the official feast — of bannock, bacon, pork, and tea, followed by a plentiful supply of pipes and tobacco — the old blind chief made an eloquent speech in which he praised the government for the way it had treated the Indians "and advised the young men to listen well to what the white men had to say and to follow their advice and not to exalt their own opinions above those of men who knew the world and had brought them such benefits". The Osnaburgh people had been told that they could elect a chief and two councillors. Missabay was at once nominated for the first position but he declined , saying that his affliction would prevent him from carrying out his duties. The old man's son Thomas, however, urged him to accept "as his wisdom would be of great value in directing the affairs of the band" and finally Missabay relented. Following the election of the two councillors, Missabay was presented with a twelve-foot Union Jack "much to the delight of all the Indians". On the morning of 13 July, after the Osnaburgh people had described the location of the lands they wanted as a reserve, the treaty party set off for Fort Hope, 200 kilometres further down the Albany River on Eabamet Lake.

At all of the stops on their tour, the commissioners would follow the same procedures as at Osnaburgh.

"Jimmy Swain, the old Albany River guide . . . took all the portages at a tremendous speed and barefooted, for there was a thick layer of callous flesh on the soles of his feet".

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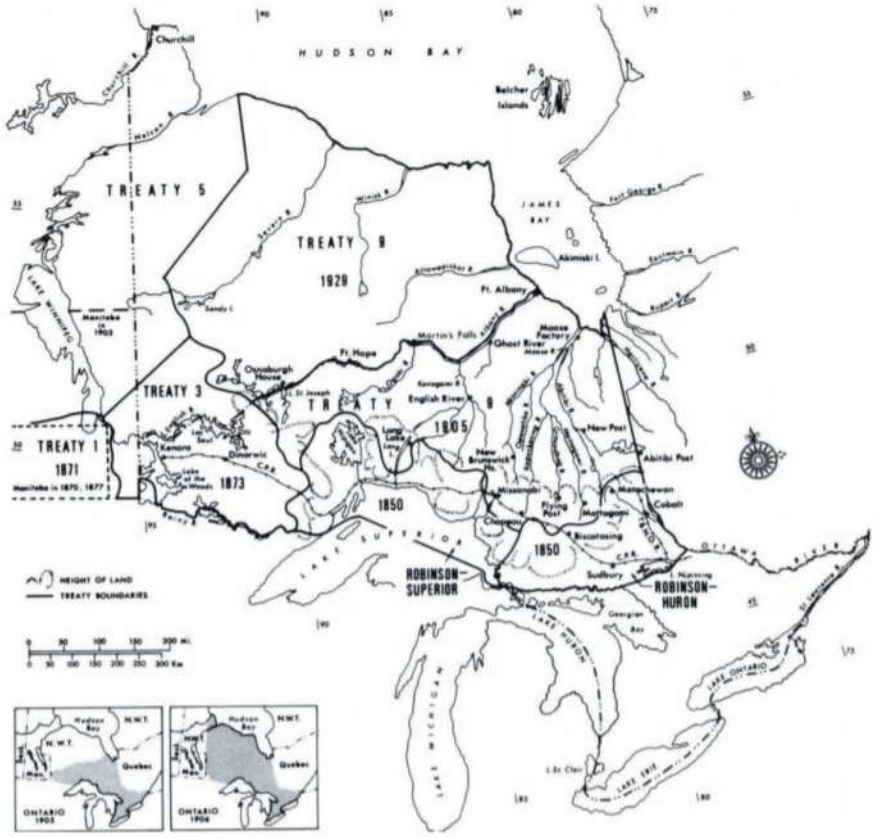

One important difference at Fort Hope, however, was that there the people wanted much fuller explanations of the treaty terms. It took the commissioners quite some time to convince them that there was not something behind the provisions of the agreement for as Moonias, one of the principal men of the band argued, "ever since I was a little boy, I have had to pay well for everything, even if it was only a few pins or a bit of braid, and now you come with money and I have to give nothing in return". Father F.X. Fafard of the Roman Catholic Mission at Albany, who was fluent in both Cree and Ojibwa languages, helped the commissioners greatly by explaining to the Indian people the government's reasons "for asking them to surrender their title to their unused lands". At this point, an individual named Yesno (so called because his knowledge of English consisted only of the words "yes" and "no") made an "excited" speech, in which he told the Indians that they were to receive cattle and implements, seed-grain and tools. "Yesno had evidently travelled", Scott remarked, and had gathered an "erroneous and exaggerated idea of what the government was doing for Indians in other parts of the country". In order to guard against any misconception or against making any promises that were not written in the treaty itself:

> it was explained that none of these issues were to be made, as the band could not hope to depend upon agriculture as a means of subsistence; that hunting and fishing, in which occupations they were not to be interfered with, should for very many years prove lucrative sources of revenue.

At Martin's Falls, "rather an unimportant post of the H.B. Co.", which the Treaty party reached on 25 July, the Indian people were again suspicious of the government's motives as it "seemed to them that an offer was being made to give them something for which they were not expected to make any return". But again the commissioners' explanations set such fears at rest "and the money paid to them was accepted with gratitude". At the feast, during which the flag was presented, the new chief William Whitehead made a "very sensible speech thanking the King for the benefits conferred on his people".

The visit to Martin's Falls ended with a dance in which, noted the commissioners, their canoe men — especially head guide Jimmy Swain — took a very prominent part. Jimmy was much in demand as a musician; everywhere he went, he carried with him a strange-looking fiddle in a blue pine box. He had scraped the belly of the instrument and rubbed it with

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The Treaty Nine fleet arrives at Long Lake Post, August 1906.

castor oil, and the G-string had two knots in it. "Jimmy was an artist", Duncan Scott recalled. "How he could play the violin at all with his huge calloused fingers was a matter for wonder, but play he did, all the jigs popular on the Albany for the last fifty years, curious versions of hymn tunes, 'Abide with Me' and 'Lead Kindly Light', a pathetic version of 'Home, Sweet Home', the name of which tune he did not know, but called it after a day or two 'The Tune the bosses like; it makes them feel bad'."

Below Martin's Falls, the official party made a week-long detour up the Kenogami River to enroll the Cree of English River Post — whose unfortunate clerk, twenty-year-old G.B. Cooper, had come direct to that "dog kennel" from Aberdeen three years earlier. For all that time "this wild uncivilized district is the only part of Canada he has seen or will probably see for years to come". He looked, added Samuel Stewart, "as if all his energy had been taken from him". Once back to the Albany River, which had widened out and lost its vicious rapids, the canoe men rigged up sails and the flotilla literally flew along as far as Chepai Sepee (Ghost River) where — so they had been forewarned by some of the English River Indians — they found various Albany Cree waiting for them. "They were anxious to get the money that would be of such service to them", Stewart confided to his diary, "but they as well as the Indians at Fort Hope, Martin's Falls and other points had heard strange stories about the two soldiers or policemen who were with the party, and they were filled with fear as to what the presence of these men could mean". One old Indian man shook all over with fear and only stopped once he had been paid, and the expedition was sailing away from them.

These first few stops on the treaty tour certainly convey the flavour of the discussions the commissioners were to have with all the Indian people they met during their two summers in the North. Altogether the further they travelled down river the more warmly their message of government paternalism seems to have been received. At Fort Albany on James Bay, Commissioners Scott, Stewart and McMartin were presented on 6 August with an address in Cree syllabics expressing the people's pleasure at being brought into the treaty:

> From our hearts we thank thee, O Great Chief, as thou hast pitied us and given us temporal help. We are very poor and weak. He (the Great Chief) has taken us over, here in our own country, through you (his servants) . . .

After sailing down the coast in a chartered Hudson's Bay Company vessel, the official party arrived on 8 August at Moose Factory, where their tents were pitched close to the officers' quarters — a poor choice, as it turned out, because of the usual welcome dance, which was held the same night. Merrymakers used the lane at the back of their tents as a promenade and their loud talking and laughing, Samuel Stewart complained, "did not act as a lullaby". On the morning of 9 August, the weary commissioners met the Indian representatives in a large room at the HBC Post and the points of the treaty were interpreted by Company employee George McLeod, with occasional assistance from Chief Trader Mowat and the Anglican Bishop of

Moosonee. The delegates, who seemed "remarkably intelligent and deeply interested in the subject . . . expressed their perfect willingness to accede to the terms and conditions". Frederick Mark, who was elected chief later that afternoon, said they had all been looking forward to the treaty for a long time, and they were uniformly glad that law and order were to be established among them. John Dick praised the proposed establishment of schools, wherein their children could be educated. And George Tappaise thanked the King both for remembering them and for giving them money, which would greatly help the poor and needy.

It took the commissioners an entire week of hard travel up river from Moose Factory to reach New Post, beautifully situated at a bend in the Abitibi River. Here again, the point on which the Indian spokesmen wanted full information was the effect the treaty would have on their hunting and fishing rights, but "when assured that these would not be taken from them, they expressed much pleasure and their willingness to sign the treaty". As a way of showing their "goodwill and thankfulness", the chief and five of his men then helped the expedition over a series of difficult rapids leading to Abitibi Post.

When Duncan Scott and his colleagues returned to the field the following summer, they were, they reported, showered with identical expressions of gratitude. Arriving at the Montreal River post of Matachewan on 19 June 1906, "we were welcomed by Mr. Lafrican, HBCo Agent, while the Indians old and young, male and female, formed in two lines through which we had to pass and shake each one by the hand". After the usual explanations and question period, the Indian spokesman Michel Baptiste said the treaty terms were very satisfactory to them. From the commissioners' point of view, it would seem that the discussion period was becoming increasingly unnecessary. At New Brunswick House near the end of July, for example, when the people were asked whether they had any questions to ask or any remarks to make, they replied through Mr. J.G. Christie, Hudson's Bay Company officer, that they were perfectly satisfied with what they were to receive under the treaty and were willing to sign at once. The same had apparently been true three weeks earlier at Mattagami Post, when the Indian people were again given the opportunity to ask questions and after a "short conversation among themselves", stated that they were fully content.

Pelham Edgar particularly remembered his stay at the head of the Mattagami River. "Duncan here began and presently finished the major poem of *Via Borealis* and named it 'Spring on Mattagami'," he recalled many years later. "A stanza would be jotted down as he sat beside me in the canoe. Lunch was always a risky meal, for I would find the poet a hundred yards off the trail

National Archives of Canada

Chief Louis Espaniol of Pogamasing at Biscotasing, 12 July 1906. ". . . quite a heavy swell, and he was very well aware of the fact."

scribbling another stanza". Edgar noted that the poem was heavily influenced by George Meredith's "Love in the Valley". Duncan Scott later claimed that it was Edgar himself who had suggested he use the Englishman's pastoral as a model. "Spring on Mattagami" was apparently the only one of Scott's longer poems with which he was ever dissatisfied. Reading those lines, it is not hard to see why:

> Through the lake furrow between the gloom and the bright'ning
> Firm runs our long canoe with a whistling rush
> While Pot'an the wise and the cunning Silver Lightning
> Break with their slender blades the long clear hush . . .

After concluding their mission at Long Lake Post, a few hundred kilometres inland from Lake Superior — and parting company there with Edmund Morris, who was staying behind to finish his Indian portraits — the commissioners returned to Ottawa in late August of 1906, fully satisfied with what they had accomplished. They had, so they reported to the Canadian government, taken a cession of the 90,000 square miles of Ontario described in the treaty as well as another 40,000 or so square miles in the Northwest Territories; and it gave them great pleasure to refer to the "evident desire of the Indians at all points visited to display their loyalty to the government by the reception given to the commissioners and also by the recognition of the benefits conferred upon them by the treaty". Yet is this how the Indian people themselves actually perceived what they had done? The treaty commissioners, whether they were aware of it or not, had performed

an important exercise in cross-cultural communication. They had conveyed some sort of positive message which had elicited an overwhelmingly favourable response.

One possible explanation is that these Cree and Ojibwa had no sense of land ownership and that therefore, as Father Fafard had advised the people of Fort Hope, they were simply giving up their title to a large area "of which they could make no use". But the question is not that simple. In its most basic sense, property involves rights, not things — and the native people seem to have viewed the treaty process as a discussion as to which party to the agreement would have which rights to which things. At Fort Hope, the skeptical band members had been told that by signing the treaty they were agreeing not to interfere with the whites who were coming into their country for a variety of reasons. They do not seem to have been told that they were giving up all of their own rights to their lands, except for certain small "reserves"; nor that by agreeing to be good subjects of His Majesty, they were accepting governmental regulation of their traditional economy. Yet this is what the legal text of the treaty actually states. The Cree and Ojibwa thereby agree to cede "all the rights, titles and privileges whatsoever" to the lands in question; and their "usual vocations" of hunting, fishing and trapping will be allowed to continue, but "subject to such regulations as may from time to time be made by the government of the country, acting under authority of His Majesty, and saving and excepting such tracts as may be required or taken up from time to time for settlement, mining, lumbering, trading or other purposes".

At Osnaburgh House, the blind chief, Missabay, had voiced the Indians' fear that if they signed the treaty they would be deprived of their traditional harvesting activities. Yet everywhere they went, the commissioners promised that Indian hunting, fishing and trapping rights "would not be taken from them". No wonder the various bands felt they were getting something for nothing. Even at those stops where the people had immediately welcomed the treaty, the issue came up. In 1974, a former Hudson's Bay Company clerk then living in Sault Ste. Marie remembered the commissioners telling the local people at Mattagami Post that they could hunt over the surrendered lands "just the same" as before the agreement. "If there was any clause in the Treaty that was put in there against that", Robert Laurence added emphatically, "the Indians didn't understand it, and I know that quite well, because they didn't understand half of what was going on anyway". James Wesley, the Cree historian of the Fort Albany reserve, had similar memories of the official visit to James Bay when interviewed on the subject in 1972. The British government told them, he said, they should not be afraid "because there will not be any legislation governing trapping, hunting animals and hunting birds and fishing if you are in favour of the treaty".

Why had the commissioners given such assurances? They must have known that the level of government represented by Ontario envoy Daniel McMartin would not only be allowing non-Indians to exploit the timber and mineral resources of the surrendered lands, but would also be assuming control of the game, the fish and the fur-bearing animals that the Indian people thought were being reserved for their own exclusive use. During the very summer that the Treaty Nine commissioners were making their way down the Albany River, provincial constables and game wardens were raiding fur trade posts along the line of the Canadian Pacific Railway and seizing pelts trapped in violation of provincial government regulations. In the years to come, the federal government would be deluged with Indian protests that they were being prevented from selling fish and game or from hunting migratory birds, and were being denied access to provincial parks or wildlife preserves.

Had they known what was actually in the treaty, it is quite possible that some of the more suspicious Albany River bands would have refused to participate. In 1869, their Ojibwa kinsmen living near Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods had rejected the Canadian government's initial offer, and it took another four years of negotiations to persuade them to sign Treaty Three. Other northern bands — particularly those living near the line of track — had been petitioning the government for more than twenty years to listen to their grievances. The years leading up to the treaty had not been easy ones. White trappers had followed the railway north, using poison to speed their catch, and the decline in fur-bearing animals had seriously affected the Indians' economic base. The new arrivals had also brought disease in their wake. During the winters of 1899 and 1900 alone, several hundred Cree and Ojibwa had died of measles and influenza. Further complicating matters was the resource boom then underway in northeastern Ontario. Arriving at Latchford Station of the Timiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway in June of 1906, Commissioner Samuel Stewart had noticed that the various stations along the route were thronged with miners and prospectors. "All ranks of men and conditions of men from all parts of the world were to be seen and heard, the chief topic of conversation being mines and minerals. We had view of some of the mines in the vicinity of Cobalt, and nearly all the members of our party became more or less interested in the subject". Stewart and his colleagues were to meet several more parties of prospectors, forest rangers and government surveyors in the course of their interior travels that summer.

In fact, the northern Ojibwa and Cree had very little room to manoeuvre. Since Confederation, an aggres-

Edmund Morris sketches Chief Cheesequinini, Chapleau, July 1906.

sive provincial government had made it clear that Ontario would proceed with the development of unsurrendered lands regardless of any Indian interests. After a series of favourable court decisions, the province had, in 1894, won effective veto power over the terms of future treaties. This fact explained the presence on the Treaty Nine expedition of Ontario commissioner Daniel McMartin. He was there to ensure, among other things, that no water power exceeding 500 hp. was included within the boundaries of any reserved lands.

Ontario, it seems, wanted Indian reserves to be as valueless as possible. Nearly seventy years later, Robert Laurence recalled the difficulties of land selection at Mattagami in 1906. The band, he said, had wanted a site east of the post that was good deer-hunting country, but James Miller, the Company trader, persuaded them that Kenogamissi Falls down river would be a better choice because of its power potential. Since the commissioners "wouldn't allow that", he added, Mr. Miller "got them the only place — where they eventually got" because "he knew there was some good pine there". That choice was particularly ironic because in the 1907 order-in-council confirming this location, the Ontario government kept all the red, white and jack pine timber to itself for a period of ten years. In 1921, the province allowed a power company to dam Kenogamissi Falls as a source of electricity for the mining town of Timmins, thereby flooding out portions of the Mattagami Indian Reserve; the Indians themselves did not get electricity until the 1950s.

Duncan Scott was well aware of this typically Canadian problem in federal-provincial relations. The Treaty Nine commissioners had been empowered, he wrote in his official report, "to offer certain conditions but were not allowed to alter or add to them in the event of their not being acceptable to the Indians". The government men, therefore, seem to have presented an ultimatum. "If you do not accept this treaty", the Cree James Wesley remembers the commissioners telling the people of Fort Albany, "the government will do whatever it wants with you. Where we have come from all the Indians have agreed to sign the treaty; if you don't you will find it hard for yourselves". Scott himself gave a more benign — but no less candid — interpretation when he summarized the government's tactics for the readers of *Scribner's* magazine. The Indian people were to make certain promises, he noted, "and we were to make certain promises, but our purpose and our reasons were alike unknowable".

> What could they grasp of the pronouncement on the Indian tenure which had been delivered by the law lords of the Crown, what of the elaborate negotiations between a dominion and a province which had made a treaty possible, what of the sense of traditional policy which brooded over the whole? Nothing. So there was no basis for argument. The simple facts had to be stated and the parental idea developed that the King is the great father of the Indians, watchful over their interests, and ever compassionate.

At conveying this "parental idea", Scott and his colleagues were only too successful. Not only did the native people thank them profusely for the promise of money and schools, but for years afterwards, the government would hear complaints about unfulfilled treaty provisions. The Cree and Ojibwa expected relief supplies; they thought that their chiefs and councillors were to be paid salaries; they asked about the feast that had been promised them at annuity time; and they insisted that a "medical officer was granted them to appear once a year". The last two points can be taken as typical. Nowhere in their official report do the Treaty Nine commissioners mention anything about holding annual feasts, or providing medical assistance, and the treaty document itself is silent on the subject. Yet there is such a thing as non-verbal communication. The commissioners sponsored a feast after the treaty-signing at every location they visited; and they were accompanied throughout their northern tour by Dr. Arthur Meindl, who gave physical examinations and vaccinations, extracted teeth and dispensed medicine. At no time did they say that these services were not part of the treaty. Robert Laurence was somewhat cynical as he remembered the way in which the government party presented itself to the Ojibwa of Mattagami Post:

> It was certainly, to my way, a one-sided agreement, you see. One-sided. And the poor Indians — they came in there with the big canoes, flags flying, and Mounted Police, and all this kind of stuff, and made a great thing about the Great White Father and how they were going to look after them and protect them. All bunkum — to my way of thinking anyway.

Like many of his contemporaries, Duncan Scott believed that the Indians were a declining race, whose only hope lay in assimilation with whites. He was more pessimistic than most, however, in the time frame he projected for such a process. Any "forecast of Indian civilization which looks for final results in one generation or two is doomed to disappointment", Scott cautioned in 1906. "Final results may be attained, say, in four centuries by the merging of the Indian race with the whites, and all these four things — treaties, teachers, missionaries, and traders — with whatever benefits or injuries they bring in their train, aid in making an end". Eight decades after Treaty Nine, these Ojibwa and Cree — their numbers having quadrupled to over 20,000 — are no longer vanishing, thanks in part to the government services either explicitly or implicitly provided by the agreement of 1905-06. And yet, though the effects of Christian religion and an improved educational level are visible on Indian reserves throughout the North, the people themselves are no closer to merging with the dominant society than they were at the time of the treaty. What government policy-makers have finally discovered is that native people across the country don't want to assimilate; that, while welcoming certain aspects of western "civilization", they prefer to create their own institutions in accordance with their own social and cultural values.

One wonders what Duncan Scott would have made of the current rise in native activism. Though he helped make official policy for another twenty-five years after the treaty — reaching the rank of deputy minister in 1913 — Scott apparently dropped the subject of the Indian Department from his conversation altogether once he had retired. "The centre of his life", his friend E.K. Brown tells us, "was the search for illuminations, and for the expression of them". These the poet had found during his Northern travels in 1905 and 1906. He would return to the subject again and again over the course of his long life, as in "The Height of Land", written in 1915:

> Here is the height of land:
> The watershed on either hand
> Goes down to Hudson Bay
> Or Lake Superior;
> The stars are up, and far away
> The wind sounds in the wood, wearier
> Than the long Ojibwa cadence
> In which Potan the Wise
> Declares the ills of life
> And Chees-que-ne-ne makes a mournful sound
> Of acquiescence. The fires burn low
> With just sufficient glow
> To light the flakes of ash that play
> At being moths, and flutter away
> To fall in the dark and die as ashes:
> Here there is peace in the lofty air,
> And Something comes by flashes
> Deeper than peace;—
> The spruces have retired a little space
> And left a field of sky in violet shadow
> With stars like marigolds in a water-meadow,
>
> Now the Indian guides are dead asleep;
> There is no sound unless the soul can hear
> The gathering of the waters in their sources . . .

James Morrison is a legal and historical researcher and writer who lives in Haileybury, Ontario.

George Quimby Remembers

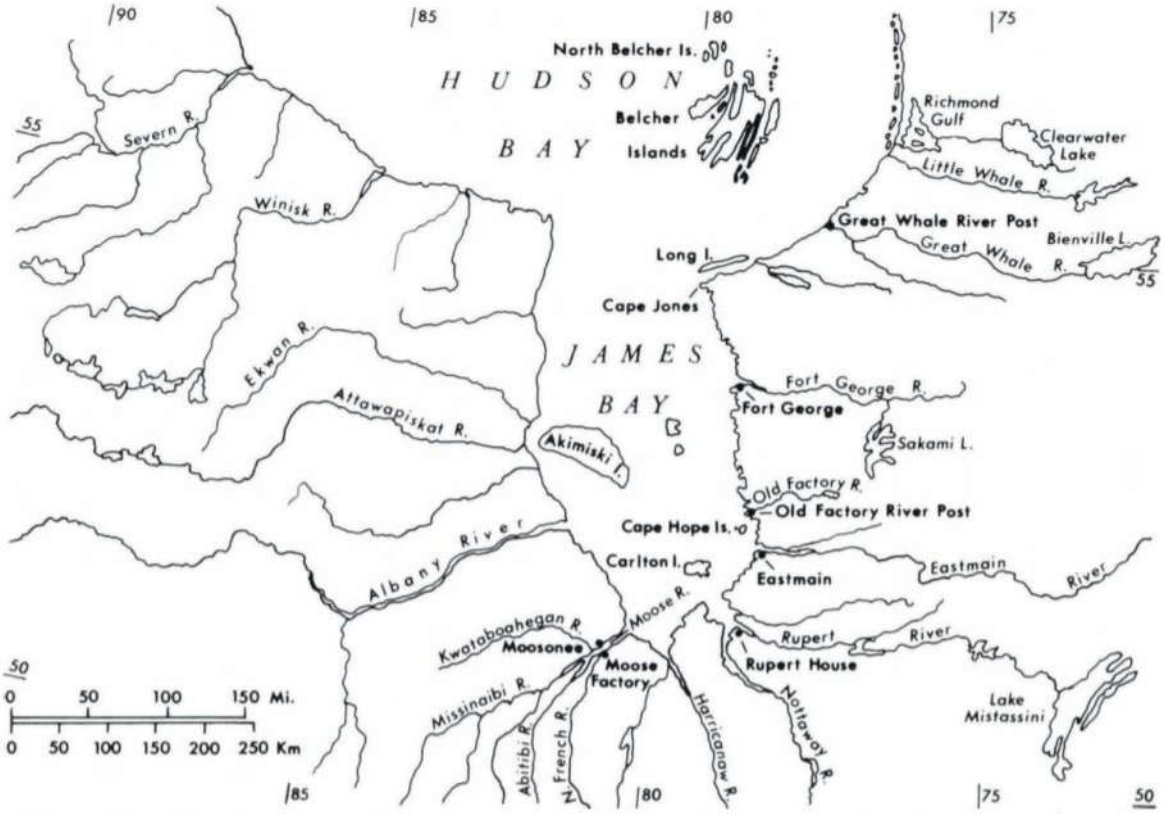
HUDSON BAY, 1939

In the summer of 1939 Dr. George M. Stanley and I made a canoe voyage along the east coast of Hudson Bay from Rupert House on the south to Richmond Gulf at the north, then south again to Great Whale River where we had arranged to meet the Hudson's Bay Company supply ship, *Fort Churchill*. Dr. Stanley was a professor of geology at the University of Michigan and I was a graduate student in anthropology at the University of Chicago. At this time I had had three years of graduate work in anthropology and field experience in archaeology and ethnology as well as a course in glacial geology from Dr. Stanley. He also knew of my interest in the correlation of geologic events and archaeological data, a subject of interest to him; consequently I was chosen to be his assistant.

The purpose of our trip was twofold. First we were to study and map the fossil beaches raised by the uplift of the land freed from the tremendous weight of the continental glacier as it retreated northward in the Hudson Bay basin, and second, we were to make an archaeological survey of possible sites associated with the raised beaches.

Dr. Stanley had a grant from the University of Michigan and I had a small one from the University of Chicago. We had obtained the necessary explorers' and anthropologists' permits from the Canadian government, and permission to enter the Keewatin District of the Northwest Territories. Although the mainland was part of Quebec, the islands off the coast were in the Keewatin District.

Our food supplies, weighing about 500 lbs., were



purchased in Canada. In 1939 powdered and dehydrated foods, popular in recent years, were expensive and difficult to obtain. Our list of food stuffs was as follows: 60 lbs. of sides of bacon, 40 lbs. of rice, 30 lbs. of oatmeal, 50 lbs. of flour, 20 lbs. of salt, 25 lbs. of dried apricots, 25 lbs. of prunes, 20 lbs. of raisins, 25 lbs. of canned butter in small tins, 30 lbs. of lard, 20 lbs. of black tea (Fort Garry brand), 10 lbs. of coffee, 15 lbs. of Klim (dried milk in cans), 15 lbs. of Bisquick (mixed biscuit flour), 5 lbs. of mixed pancake flour, 10 lbs. of Cream of Wheat, 20 lbs. of brick and processed cheese, 30 lbs. of jam in small jars, 25 lbs. of hardtack, 24 cans of condensed milk (unsweetened), 24 cans of beef or other meat dinners, 24 cans assorted soups, 6 loaves of bread, a 40 lb. sack of potatoes, 20 cans of Crosse and Blackwell's Date and Nut Bread, 1 dozen lemons for making lemon sauce, 25 lbs. of dried beans (navy and lima), 24 cans of pork and beans, 24 cans of sardines, 2 gallons of sherry, 1 small bag of bermuda onions, and 20 sticks of black tobacco for use in trade.

In addition to our food supplies, we had our clothing, camping gear, surveying instruments, two ten-gallon drums of gasoline, a small stove, cooking utensils, sleeping bags, an extra outboard motor, gas cans, first aid kit, mosquito ointment, bee keepers' net headdress, cigarette tobacco and papers, cameras, maps, notebooks, and a 22 calibre rifle.

I kept a brief record, day by day, of our 500 mile trip to Richmond Gulf and back to Great Whale River. In late August we travelled to the Belcher Islands on the supply ship *Fort Churchill*. (I will quote from my diary, then comment where I feel additions or further explanations are useful).

June 27. Left Moosonee on the H. B. Co. motor ketch *Fort Churchill*. Raining, visibility poor. Shore flat and swampy. Anchored off Stag Rock for the night. Warned not to point at rock lest evil befall us. Slipped up. Slight roll and rain during night.

June 28. Went into Rupert River with the high tide. Landed at Rupert House. Indians fixed large canoe and built box for our motor. Very pleasant time with Mr. and Mrs. [James and Maud] Watt, Hugo and Jacqueline.

At Rupert House we obtained a 23 foot freight canoe built by the Indians there. These wooden canoes, made by hand, and covered with canvas, can carry a ton of freight plus men and gear. Our canoe had been modified by adding a box-like structure to the stern for attachment of our small outboard motor. Also there was fastened a series of one-inch square wooden run-

ners along the length of the bottom an inch or two apart. This turned out to be one of the wisest things we could have done because in certain situations in breaking waves we were unable to abort a landing once begun, and the canoe slid over roof-like ridges of rock without damage.

While packing supplies on 1 July, I noticed a small group of Cree Indians performing a bear ceremonial about 60 feet behind us. The lifeless black bear was laid out on its back on a Hudson's Bay blanket spread on the ground. The bear's head and feet were adorned with coloured ribbons and the Indians were chanting and drumming. I had read about bear ceremonials, and since packing our supplies had top priority I paid little attention to the ceremony. I subsequently found out that no anthropologist had ever witnessed a bear ceremonial in North America.

July 2. Left Rupert House in canoe. Carried missionary [Harry Hamilton from Eastmain Port] with us. Crossed bay. Wind came up slightly. Went into Trout River with high tide. Fisherman and Indians from Moosonee camped there. Indian warned us not to point at Stag Rock, did so himself. Mosquitoes spoiled sleep, slept in morning on the rocks.

July 5. Good day. Stopped at island off E. Main River, looked at beaches. Went into river. Hit bars and rocks. Met [Ken] Retallack who asked if the king and queen had visited Canada. We were first white people he had seen in six months. Talked a blue streak and gave us dinner. Apologized for the warping and tilting of his house due to frost heave. Claimed that in the spring whole sections of his house were inaccessible because the doors had jammed due to frost heave. He asked where we were going, and expressed surprise and doubt when we told him we intended to go to Richmond Gulf in the canoe. Howard, the missionary, plans to build a church at E. Main. Was chagrined to learn that Retallack was using the church bell for an anchor. Retallack told him he was using it for a "bell buoy". Left Eastmain minus Howard and the canoe rode better. Stopped off Cape Hope Islands for a while. Nice country, getting rocky. An Eskimo family on C. Hope Islands is southernmost group in H. Bay. Indian fires on islands toward coast. Decided to attempt Old Factory River that night. Met canoe load of Indians, asked directions but they did not speak English. Gave them chocolate and tea. They pointed to inside passage among islands indicating that we should take it. Passed their camp, fires, canoes, etc. Sighted Old Factory at dusk, weather making up. Indians came out to meet us. Just as we made the post the storm hit. Indians unloaded for us. Lots of dogs, wigwams, etc. Spent the night with [William] Anderson. First white men he had seen for half year. Hot in the house because we had to keep windows closed to avoid mosquitoes. Anderson about to leave for E. Main. Ice went out here on June 5th. Dogs howled all night. Dogs during winter had killed girl. Had to shoot part of team.

In the course of our voyage from Rupert House to Old Factory River Post, I became increasingly aware that I was living in some kind of a time-warp. I was observing sights and customs and hearing sounds that were similar to those of the fur-trading period in the Upper Great Lakes region 200 years earlier. The Indians lived in dome-shaped and conical wigwams, wore beaded moccasins of smoke-tanned leather and trade-cloth clothing, travelled by canoe in summer but used snowshoes and toboggans for winter travel and transport. They made their living by hunting, fishing, and trapping for the fur trade.

Old Factory River Post with its wigwams, Indians and even a black-robed missionary, could have been seen in the Upper Great Lakes in 1739. It and other Hudson's Bay Company posts exhibited eighteenth century types of construction, wrought iron fittings, pit saws, trading areas, and fur presses. Trade goods characteristic of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries still being traded in 1939 were glass beads of various colours, white kaolin pipes, traps, guns and ammunition, cloth, woollen blankets, tobacco, kettles, steel blades for crooked knives, and knives, awls, and needles of steel.

July 6. Weather bad. Moved out to rocky island after saying goodby to Anderson and lunching on salt goose. Also met R.C. priest who said ice bad around Fort George. Bugs bad on island. Heard seals during the night. Could see R.C. cross on island inland from us.

July 7. Away at daybreak. Fine running. Made Paint Hills Islands by 7 a.m. Islands High and rocky. Bugs bad. Surveyed all day. Saw the ice pack from top of islands. It is cold due to wind blowing across ice. Moved to next island and set up camp. Found driftwood high above modern beach or storm levels, under conditions that indicate water deposition.

July 9. Rain and cold. Stayed in sleeping bags in tent. Drank tea, smoked, and cussed the weather.

July 10. Surveyed all day. Met five families of ptarmigans.

In his article Dr. Quimby refers to a number of Hudson's Bay Company employees encountered on his 1939 journey. The HBC people and the posts at which they served are listed below: James and Maud Watt of Rupert River; Ken Retallack of East Main; William Anderson of Old Factory River; John Blackhall of Fort George; Tommy Carmichael, Jimmy Lusk, Roy Jeffrey and Harold Udgarden of Great Whale River; Ernest Riddell, manager at the Belcher Islands and Jack Tyrer and Bryce Merrill who served there as apprentices; Norman Ross who appears to have been travelling between posts in the summer of 1939.

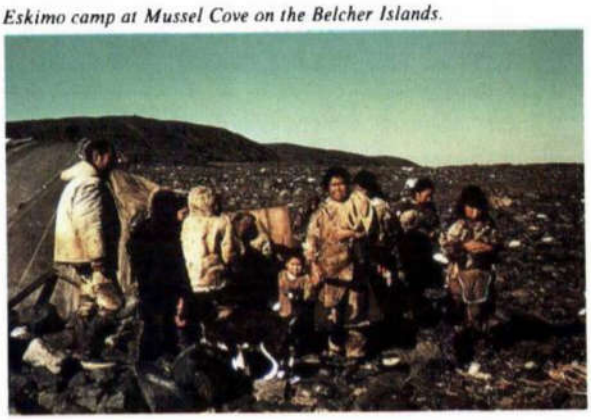
HBC post and Indian camp at Old Factory River.

Camping site on an island in the Loon Island group.

The Indian camp at Fort George.

A government doctor treats a foot injury at Great Whale River, Harold Udgarden looking on.

Eskimo camp at Mussel Cove on the Belcher Islands.



Natives at the HBC post, Great Whale River.

July 11. Left Paint Hills Islands. Met the *Fort Churchill* in outside Pass. Stopped and chatted. Skipper J.O. Neilsen expressed relief at our safety, admitted that the weather was lousy, warned us of the ice at Fort George. Chatted with Guy Cadney [the engineer] and H. B. Men. Some nuns on board. We took letter for Ft. Geo. Left *Fort Churchill*, met Indians at next island and traded two handfuls of tea and some tobacco for some dressed ducks. Indians very pleased so they must have got best of the deal. Two canoes of them alongside of us. Stopped at Comb Hills Island to survey, took inside passage and made it. Abandoned wigwam and plenty evidence of recent occupation. Fetched up at uncharted rocky island for the night.

I photographed the Indians and their canoes and was particularly lucky to get a picture of one canoe against a rainbow.

July 12. Wind and fog. Unable to leave island. Made checker board on duffle back and used lima and navy beans for men. Stanley wins consistently.

July 15. Fog lifted sufficiently so that George Stanley could see the canoe, and we departed. A heavy swell was running and a rip tide set in to complicate matters. I am getting my religion back. In late afternoon a heavy wind freshened up from the N.W. Shipping water. Decided not to risk an attempt to run into Fort George since we didn't know where it was for sure. Fetched up at nearest island (uncharted in Loon Island group). Camped after securing canoe at one end of island. Tide came in and we noticed that we are on one island and the canoe on another. We can wade to our canoe all right. Cold as hell.

July 16. Still on island. We are camped just above high tide limit. Island is not high, and there is little shelter from the wind which threatens to tear the tent apart. Built wall out of driftwood and rock about four feet high and thirty feet long to protect us from wind. Fresh water in the rock crevices. The animals in it turn red when boiled in our tea.

July 17. Still unable to leave island. Can see skipper's brush beacon on island to N.W. Saw HBC Plane land inland and figure it must be Fort George.

The rock portion of our protective wall was composed of dry laid boulders and rocks fitted as best we could. Unfortunately that wall resembled the remains of Viking structures. In the 1960s I informed fellow archaeologists in Ottawa of what we had done on some unnamed island in the Loon Island group. In 1977 I was informed that our campsite had been discovered and had become the target of a research proposal. To eliminate the possibility of confusion it was suggested that I present an illustrated lecture on our campsite at the annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology held that year in Ottawa. My paper, entitled "An Exotic Campsite in East Hudson Bay" was published in *Historical Archaeology*, (Volume 10, 1978).

July 18. Wind abated. Ran into Fort George. Current causes breakers in river. Sounded all the way, and got plenty wet. Quite a thrill to see the flag go up as we are sighted. Met the Blackhalls and Maggie whom we saw at Moose. Got canoe repaired, photographed Indians, met mission staff. Had a few drinks. George Stanley did string tricks for the Indians and had them completely baffled. They all tried to bite string and ropes together themselves. Soon began to bring wood, rope, etc. for George to mend.

July 19. Left Fort George, good day. Stopped at Wastigun Island to survey. Left there, followed string of uncharted reefs by mistake. Out of sight of land by late afternoon. Headed for where land ought to be. Compass no good due to variation. Mirages. At evening landed somewhere near Atikujan Point. Found little harbour for canoe, camped on bare rock. Seal came in and looked us over.

July 20. Big wind, rollers, and fog. Ran with seas, too dangerous. Fetched up at Seal River, although it may be Roggan [It was Seal]. There is large gas cache here. Slept in p.m. Canoe high and dry and must wait for tide to come in and float it again. Very desolate country. Hard to determine where the mainland is. Low and plenty of water. Must keep outside. Tide in, moved out to island.

July 21. Rather exciting. Short jumps in the canoe from one island to the next, in wind and fog. Must run with the seas to keep from swamping. Wet. Camped on island. Had to drag the canoe between two islands as the tide was going out. We waded and pulled, hit plenty of rocks. Just made it in time.

July 22. On Island, gales and thunderstorms. Held tent down with rocks. Had to move canoe at night. Tide racing across our landing place. Looked bad the way the current rushed around us, but moved the canoe all right.

July 23. Still here. Very foggy. Good displays of northern lights. Lots of mosquitoes. Will attempt to make Cape Jones. Left Island, fog set in, just made the next island. George looked around a bit while I watched canoe. Fresh grave on island. Body has rocks piled over it, clothing still intact, but skeleton showing. Fog lifted, saw Cape Jones not far off, and ran for it. Stopped to talk with Indians. Stanley climbed hill to look situation over. Black fog bank stationary off cape. Seas do not look high from where we are. Indians say to portage, but we are going to try the cape. Gave Indians tobacco. Started around cape. The seas were very high and rip tide was coming around the point. The fog moved in on us. George handled the boat in the heavy seas while I prayed

Shoreline of glaciated rock north of Cape Jones.

and got ready to hold us off the rocks with the sounding pole. Had to run with the seas, which curled up above the canoe's midship and left me hanging in the air on the crest of each wave. Fog came in fast, land disappeared but could see reefs sticking out with waves breaking on them. Had to run across reefs to follow the land and to keep the canoe with the waves. Hit all of them, but the waves carried us across. Could see ice cakes floating to seaward of us. Around the cape seas still were high. I profanely suggested that we get on dry land. Just ahead of us was a polar bear swimming. Forgot troubles and prepared to photograph him. George ran motors and camera at the same time. Ran after bear, got pictures of him. I was afraid that he couldn't get good picture from his station in the stern of the canoe. In bow, I was closer to bear. Photographed bear and headed for small harbor, George had picked from hill. Met Indians who had watched us go around the cape. Gave them some more tobacco. Sitting on land helped confidence to return. Using my tobacco the Indians rolled cigarettes the size of cigars. Courage back, left in canoe and headed north. Tremendous seas. Front quarter of the canoe out of water as we plane on the crest, and the foam curls over the canoe at midship. Stanley bailed. Too dangerous. Fetched up at nearest island and landed. Congratulated ourselves on getting out of the seas, and saw three loaded canoes of Indians easily riding the waves we had given up. Indians joined us. Said we shouldn't go on in loaded canoe with motor. As a matter of fact they ride better than we do. George has to throttle down on each wave, and even then we don't seem to have the buoyancy the Indians do, because we are still going too fast. Moved back one island and camped with Indians. Young one could speak English. Had fine time, and enjoyed the company.

Although our canoe had been heavily loaded, it was now considerably lighter. We had used a fair amount of our gas supply and had eaten much of our heaviest canned foods. Although we had 100 shear pins for our propeller, we never had to use them. The propeller rode higher than the bottom of the canoe and when landing over rocks and reefs the wooden runners took the shock and protected the canoe. In retrospect, we certainly had lots of luck.

July 24. Moved out. Wind came up, but we just got inside the protection of Long Island Sound in time. Low limestone cliffs on the water, high hills inland. Picturesque. Passed a lot of seals on the rocks at low tide. Camped on limestone ledge. Beautiful northern lights.

July 25. Wind came up across sound. Had to move

Eskimo camp near the entrance to Richmond Gulf.

Eskimo women at Mussel Cove camp.

Eskimos from the Belcher Islands on board the Fort Churchill.

300′ to sand beach. Camped on lee shore, and moved load and canoe above high tide. Looked over island. Mosquitoes bad. Ice pack on other side of island. Rained.

July 26. Rain in a.m. Surveyed in p.m. Found huge craters, look like Eskimo ruins, but are probably pushed up by the ice. High boulders all angular.

July 27. Caught with pants down on wrong side of Sound. Could have run along the shore, but can't get over there because of the high waves. Sun came out and we dried everything. On the mainland are patches of snow. We have lost track of the time. The dollar watch still running has the sun setting at five p.m. which doesn't seem right. Wind dropped and we crossed sound. Ran to Little Cape Jones and met some Eskimos. Landed in N. Branch of River. Both of us went in over our boots landing the canoe. Colder than hell. Traded with the Eskimos.

July 28. Wind up. Stayed in port. Went trout fishing and caught some small brook trout. Nice rainbow yesterday. Took pictures of it and the Eskimos. Explored about.

July 29. Debated weather. Left, had hard time rounding spit, due to wind and current and water too deep for poling. Made Sucker Creek, ran in and camped. Banks thirty feet vertical. Had hard time camping. Camped in spruce.

July 30. Tide out. Had to run rapids in river. Hit a few rocks. Big ground swell. Off shore wind kicks up bad cross chop on the points. Stopped on Red Island, rocks very sharp. Ran on, stopped in Otasks Harbour to get our courage back. Decided to make dash for Great Whale River despite weather making-up. Made it at dusk, just ahead of storm. The flag went up and the Eskimos and [Tommy] Carmichael and Jimmy Lusk and Roy Jeffrey were on hand to meet us. Had concert that night. All of us in the chorus. Eskimos listened outside. Dogs howled all night.

July 31. Pleasant stay with Hudson's Bay Co. men. We had one fresh egg apiece for breakfast. Boys all joke with Eskimo cook, Maria, make off color suggestions in Eskimo, and even chase her around the table, and occasionally give her an affectionate pat on the behind. She screams a bit, seems to reply curtly in Eskimo, takes it all good naturedly, and somehow seems to wait on table and get the work done. The wind is up and the glass low. Quite cold and in sleeping bags at night. Fires in stove. Eskimo tent village here, low mountains and lots of fog. Also sand dunes at river mouth. Met Old Harold [Harold Udgarden, popular HBC man at Great Whale River for many years]. Carmichael told of his voyage by motor boat from Great Whale and claims the only reason he and [Norman] Ross survived was by getting drunk. Ice and seas over the boat all the time, and the Eskimos ran the *Scotia*. Carmichael says he and Ross swiped the skipper's cheese at Ft. George. Evening spent in stories of the arctic. Carmichael claimed he and [John] Blackhall going out on furlough were within 18 miles off Newfoundland when storm blew them to England. Carmichael had broken arm and was propped between medicine chest and chair trying to keep the other arm intact, while Blackhall and family were buried in the sugar cargo which had shifted, and was also being contaminated by a loose plumbing connection. Carmichael said he prayed all the way across. The captain was 80 and the mate 70, both deaf, and neither knew where they were. George and I gave Jimmy radio messages to send to our families. The static is bad and we don't know when they will get through. [It took 18 days to get the messages to their destinations.]

August 1. Spent day reading and repacking for rest of voyage. Went out with the *Scotia* to set nets. Post is short of food, and we are trying to get fish to eat, but only seem to catch sculpins which are no good. Heavy seas coming over bar at river mouth and Eskimos are out after white whales. Tried to get out radio message again, but no luck.

August 2. Loaded in a.m. Eskimos all watching and helping and having good time. We seem to be the first white men to have made this trip without a guide. We have secured the services of Isaac Tukaluk as rodman. He speaks no English, and we no Eskimo, so this promises to be interesting. Left Great Whale in early p.m. weather good. Ran inside Manitunik Sound which is very pretty. Islands rise to the west of us and drop sheer on the side toward us. Must be almost a thousand feet high. Low moss and lichen covered mountains on the mainland. There are occasional patches of snow on the mainland. No more signs of ice, although it must still be outside of us. [Ice went out at Belchers on Aug. 6]. Camped at Boat Opening at sunset. Had supper of apricot, rice, bacon, bread (banek), and tea. Isaac ate plenty. We all sleep together in the tupik, Isaac in the middle.

August 3. N.E. wind blew up. Had to unload canoe and beach it. Waves came up above high tide mark, but stopped two feet short of our food cache, and two feet from tent. Rain and fog, but not so cold. Strong current through opening. We paddled through. Engine wet and wouldn't start, but George fixed it. Ran on slight ground swell with offshore wind to Little Whale River. Heavy seas off mouth. Arrived at sunset. Lots of whales at the river mouth playing around and spouting. We ran in and camped on shore. Misjudged the tide and had the water at the door of the tent. Expected to see a whale stick his head in any minute. During night storm blew tent down twice. Got pretty wet.

August 4. Little Whale River: Spent rather sleepless

night due to tent blowing down in storm. Moved camp up river into more sheltered spot. Rain blows up the cliffs in miniature geysers which are quite impressive. Heavy breakers at the river mouth. No whales today. Practiced Eskimo with Isaac. Caught lemming and kept him (or her) in tent for while. Ate some moss and cream of wheat, but refused cheese and hardtack. Climbed around on us, and explored sleeping bags. Departed in a huff, but returned later. Seems quite tame, but has disappeared again. The country is high, cuesta-like. Steep sides inland. Snow in some of the crevices.

August 5. Survey beaches up to 870′ or thereabouts. Regular mountain climbing with sheer drops of 200 feet. Wonderful view from high rocks looking inland. Plenty of beaches. No sites. Isaac stunned a ptarmigan with a well-aimed rock, then choked it to death. Had it stuffed for supper. Slight argument with Isaac who wanted the entrails cooked in the bird. We made him remove them, but suspect he ate them after dinner with us. We gave him an onion which he didn't like at all.

August 6. Up Nastapoka Sound. Nice running weather. Light swell. High islands. One canoe and one kayak came out to meet us off Gulf Hazzard. Made presents of tobacco. Went ashore at tent village. Made presents of candy and tobacco. Dogs, women in sealboots and print dresses, scotch shawls, babies on back, tents, fish and racks, harpoon gear, kayaks on special stilts crossed, etc. The Eskimos said the Hazzard was in its safe period and we should attempt the passage right away. Went thru with Isaac watching the water. The Hazzard is about two miles long, and an eighth of a mile wide and seems fifteen hundred feet high. Rather calm after the tales we had heard of the geysers and whirlpools. Small eddies and whirlpools did appear suddenly, and small faults in the water, occasionally a slight settling of the canoe as if being sucked down. Current along shore running in opposite direction. Likely is a terrible place when at its worst. Very scenic at present. Made it all right and proceeded to Cairn Island in Richmond Gulf. Met the Abbes and John Marr. Had pleasant dinner with them. Slept in H.B. Co. outpost storehouse. Whaleboat and kayak of Eskimos leisurely set sail for Grt. Whale River. Abbe suggested that perhaps the whaleboat had been brought into the area by H.B. Co. orders to be on hand if our parties should get stranded. Traded with Indians from inland. Two plugs tobacco and half pound tea for crooked knife.

August 7. Breakfast with the Abbes. Practiced Eskimo language. Kayak came in from Nastapoke to trade. Model kayak to George, harpoon to Ernst. Mrs. Abbe and I worked on Eskimo dictionary. George worked on the Abbe's engine which had been ailing. Spent pleasant evening, also had some real cigarettes.

The University of Minnesota botanical expedition consisted of Dr. and Mrs. Ernst Abbe, John Marr and their Eskimo interpreter, Jacob Stone. Their expedition's headquarters was the Hudson's Bay Company's small outpost building on Cairn Island. They were conducting a botanical survey of the Richmond Gulf area. It was at this time I realized I had seen plenty of kayaks, but nary an umiak, the Eskimo skin-covered boat used for transportation. The umiak had been replaced by the Rupert House freight canoe.

August 8. Packed in a.m. Light load for short run in Gulf. George fixed Abbe's motor. Left Abbes then and went to Beach Creek. Made preliminary reconnaissance. Toward evening mosquitoes and black flies just terrible. Caught without net, we could just barely keep our eyes clear of them in order to see. Made camp.

August 9. Surveyed back on good Indian portage trail. Perched boulders. Plenty beaches. Mosquitoes terrible toward evening. Covered with them. It is much hotter inland than on the coast. One can see the fog pour over the cliffs toward the ocean.

The perched boulders had been deposited by the ice as the glacier melted. These boulders were balanced on rocks in unstable positions. If sea waters ever had reached them they would have been toppled by the wave action. Thus these perched boulders indicated we were at the top level of the raised beaches in this area.

While on the portage trail I photographed a freshly abandoned Indian camp consisting of two wigwam frames. The poles of these conical wigwams were supported at the base by a ring of boulders on a sparse soil covering the bedrock. Each wigwam had a central hearth with fresh ash and charcoal. Suspended on a cord from the apex each had a cluster of bones and feathers symbolizing something unknown to me.

August 10. Broke camp, proceeded to Weatchenon Mts. Nice waterfalls. Surveyed inland, thru swamp and up hills. Quite a run. Had supper in river mouth, and departed shortly after. High short choppy seas broke over canoe which pounded badly. George had to bail and run the engine too. Got dark, thus added to our worries. Landed on little island for the night. Had a hell of a time finding fresh water.

August 11. Broke camp, returned to Cairn Island. Repacked in hurry. Abbe party and ourselves started for Hazzard. Heavy choppy seas came up suddenly. Shipped a lot of water, and made for shelter on point. Eskimos said to land and wait. Later went on to Hazzard and camped inside to the south. Reconnaissance by both parties.

August 12. Hazzard survey. Long walk. Thunder

Abandoned Indian campsite inland from Richmond Gulf.

storm. Beaches and perched boulders. Returned at night. Slid down small waterfall. Bugs bad. Beautiful northern lights through the fog.

August 13. Left Hazzard and started south to meet the *Fort Churchill* at Great Whale River on date pre-arranged with Carmichael. Went through Hazzard in dense fog. Stopped at Eskimo Camp to trade. Took pictures and got harpoon. Good sea at mouth of Little Whale. Kept on and made Boat Opening at nightfall. Abbes remarked on the difference between coast and inland climate. Heavy current through opening which really cut loose shortly after we passed through to our old camping place inside. Northern lights we saw here had red and purple flickers in them.

August 14. Calm and cloudy. Stopped near Schooner Opening on island made of limestone. Abbes collected plants and we made camp preparatory to possible survey. George on reconnaissance, Isaac and I with tide, camp and canoe to watch. Abbes departed for Great Whale River. Isaac very disappointed. I have never seen anyone so sad. Toward evening George returned. Survey not profitable there. After packing and quick bite to eat, refuel etc., we started for Grt. Whale River just at sunset. Isaac said he could find way in dark, so we decided to try it. About twenty five miles in dusk and dark. George could make out shore by phosphorescence of water along it. I couldn't see a damn thing, myself. Isaac continues with his habit of urinating in the bottom of the canoe. I haven't told George about this because he does all the bailing while we are running. The food is safe because it is raised off the bottom. River mouth was hard to find exactly. Hit bar at mouth, jumped out and pulled canoe across. 11 p.m. Abbes and H.B. Co. heard our motor and guided us into the landing with flashlights. Everyone very surprised that we came in despite the darkness. Pleasant reunion all around. Stayed at residence.

August 15. Moved to warehouse, packing etc.

August 16. Surveyed. No word of the *Fort Churchill.*

August 17. Surveyed. Doctor's boat came in. Norman Ross aboard. Big bridge game at night etc.

August 18. Received word that the *Churchill* is coming. Set up old canon pointing to River mouth.

August 19. Received word that the *Churchill* is not coming.

August 20. *Churchill* coming.

August 21. *Churchill* not coming.

August 22. The flag is up, and Eskimos say *Churchill* is coming. The *Fort Churchill* arrived. Some talk

of war. We haven't had much news during the summer and don't seem to miss it.

From August 23 through 25, we kept busy with odds and ends prior to our departure for the Belcher Islands. George Stanley made arrangements to store the canoe and outboard motors at Great Whale River. We had used all of our gasoline and most of our food. I traded my 22 calibre rifle and ammunition for a sealskin parka and packed my duffle bag. I gave Isaac my tweed jacket, which I would not need in Louisiana where I had an archaeological job starting in October.

I spent some time with Old Harold Udgarden. With his aid as consultant and interpreter, I was able to obtain kinship terminologies for Eskimo and inland Indians. Only later did I learn that Old Harold had been associated with [documentary film-maker] Robert Flaherty and that I had missed a fine opportunity to learn of Flaherty's adventures in the Belcher Islands from a participant observer.

August 26. Departed on the *Fort Churchill* headed for the Belcher Islands. Strong headwind and heavy sea. Arrived late p.m., went through narrow pass in rocks. Five or six kayaks put out to meet us. Took four of them aboard to pilot us into post. On board the *Churchill* are the Indian crew, the skipper J. O. Neilsen, Guy Cagney the engineer, the Abbe party, George and I, the Royal Canadian Mounted Policeman, Kupkee, [Ernest] Riddell, and Julie. The language has not been on a very high level which doesn't bother any of us, although perhaps Mrs. Abbe is learning some things she shouldn't. After a particularly bad joke of Kupkee's which she overheard, he thought he ought to take another boat home; but since there won't be another for one year, he is stuck. Riddell came south on the *Nascopie* to Harrison thence by whaleboat to Great Whale where he joined the *Churchill*. Kupkee does most of his travelling in bed. The post has a nice harbor. Jack Tyrer and Bryce Merrill met us. Lots of H.B. Co. business ashore. Got some archaeological specimens from Eskimos.

August 27. Went ashore. Borrowed kayak and paddled around a bit. Photographed tent village etc. Picked up Flaherty's anchor, snagged by anchor of the *Fort Churchill*.

August 28. Departed: Attempted passage through hole in rocks to Wetalluk Sound. Too rough, after several attempts put about and went into Mussel Cove. Colder than hell. I have been wearing my fur parka again. Boys claim the ice went out here on 6 August. Went ashore. Got more archaeological specimens. Photographed village.

August 29. Got through into Wetalluk Sound. Went up to Haig Inlet. Hit a few rocks, anchored safely. Ashore. Old Eskimo site here with square houses. When tide out collected mussels and cooked them on cabin stove which is going all the time to keep us warm. Good northern lights. Wind blows hard. Skipper had anchor watch stay on deck. I am sleeping in hold with cargo of gasoline, seal oil, and rotten walrus meat in seal skin dans on deck above me. Also sled dogs. Have sleeping bag on rock ballast. I should be at home in any steerage after this. All in all it is pretty comfortable though. We are short of food and water.

Here ends my diary. Not included is the rest of the stay on the Belchers, the trip back to Great Whale River, the voyage down the coast stopping at Fort George, Old Factory River, Charlton Island, Rupert House and finally Moose Factory on 10 September.

This was the last voyage of the *Fort Churchill*, which was scheduled for replacement in 1940. During this voyage we learned that Canada was at war with Germany. George Stanley and I had planned to return to Great Whale River in 1940 or 1941. We never did return. ◆

George I. Quimby is Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at the University of Washington, Seattle, and Director Emeritus of the Burke Memorial Washington State Museum.

The colour photographs that accompany this article may well be among the first Kodachrome slides made in the Hudson Bay area. Dr. Quimby writes: "Their film speed was 7 or 7½. I used an Argus C3 camera with a film speed of 3.2. When I returned to Grand Rapids, Michigan, in September of 1939 I took the exposed film to the local camera shop. They in turn sent the film to the Eastman Company in Rochester, N.Y. The Eastman Company wanted details of light, temperature, etc., which I gave to them."

British Columbia's Annual Ash Heap

Forest Fires Brought Death and Destruction To Many West Coast Pioneer Communities

BY BETTY C. KELLER

On the morning of 20 August 1902 a forest fire bore down on the mining settlement at Wild Horse Creek in B.C.'s Kootenay district; in less than an hour the fire had consumed all four of the bridges on the only road leading to the mine, all of the homes in the settlement, the mine cribbings and all but one of the mine buildings. The remaining building, the mine's cyanide plant, was only saved because the miners had been trapped there and had taken turns handling the hoses and pumps before plunging into a water-filled pit at the creek's edge to escape the smoke and heat.

That same day, the buildings at the Black Rock Mine burned while the miners and their families took refuge in the mine tunnels. When the wind blew flames into the tunnel, igniting the mine timbers, the refugees saved themselves by damping the timbers down with teacupfuls of the drinking water they had brought with them into the mine. At Ymir, just south of Nelson, the mining settlement there was only saved from destruction that day by a shift in the wind after fire had completely surrounded it.

Only ten days earlier, Van Anda on Texada Island had undergone the same ordeal. In early September it was the turn of Vancouver Island when the coastline from Sooke to Jordan River burned. At Alberni, as a forest fire burned its way closer, every member of the community was organized into a fire brigade, and at the summit of the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway, 3,000 cords of wood stacked beside the track disappeared in the flames. In Victoria, ashes from the up-island fires fell on Oak Bay, and the pall of smoke hanging over the city become so dense by mid-afternoon each day that electric lights were needed in shops and homes.

These fires represent only a sampling of the province's forest blazes that year; no official records were kept until the Forestry Branch was established in the Department of Lands in 1909, and the newspapers of that time only reported those that involved loss of life or dramatic escapes or those that threatened major centres. They seldom bothered themselves with fires that their readers could see for themselves; these were considered to be a normal part of the summer scenery. As one Vancouver pioneer explained, forest fires were "merely a nuisance to be expected with any dry summer".

Ironically, the people who suffered most from these fires — the mining men and their families, the logging and lumbermill operators and the settlers — were probably responsible for most of their own suffering, yet they were not altogether at fault. Most were newcomers to the province and could not comprehend how forests could become tinder dry in summer in a climate that was subject to a deluge for the other six months of the year. And even when they did understand the danger of fire, they had little concept of elementary fire prevention techniques.

Thousands of prospectors, constantly on the move in search of gold-bearing properties, made campfires

Vancouver Public Library

Near Carrall Street and Hastings, Vancouver, the morning after the great fire of 13 June 1886. Photographer Harry T. Devine recorded the destruction of the young city.

each time they stopped for the night. Few took precautions to see that their fires were really dead before moving on, or pinched out their cigarette butts before they threw them away. Some prospectors even set bush fires deliberately to clear areas where mineral deposits seemed likely, and they left a trail of fires behind them every summer.

Mine owners, anxious to get their properties into production, seldom took the time to prepare fireguards around their mine settlements, so that they were completely at the mercy of fires ignited in nearby forests. This happened at Whitewater (also known as Retallack) and Zincton on the New Denver-Kaslo Road in July 1910. Four miners at the Lucky Jim Mine at Zincton suffocated when they retreated into the mine tunnel to escape a fire which had swept suddenly down the mountainside toward the mine; the mine foreman also died when he ran back to lead the men to safety. All the mine buildings were destroyed as well as both Zincton and Whitewater. Between the time that the first alarm was given of approaching fire and the time that it had passed into the forest beyond Whitewater not more than forty-five minutes had elapsed.

Early logging practices made few concessions to fire prevention because there was neither legislative nor economic incentive to do so. Until the first decade of this century, most lumbermen believed that forest fires were simply a natural accompaniment to progress and development, and since they were also convinced that the timber supply was virtually inexhaustible, the only fires deemed worthy of concern were those that destroyed their logging and milling equipment. In many of the coast areas, however, this attitude persisted into the 1920s. When the novelist Bertrand Sinclair witnessed the disastrous fires in the Harrison Lake district in 1914, he was amazed to find this cavalier attitude to the destruction of the forests still existed even among the best of the operators in the district. In his novel *Big Timber*, he reflects this prevailing attitude when he has his hero, after losing his entire timber lease to fire, tell his wife that he's not licked yet because he has saved his equipment. He can recoup his losses, he tells her, because "the country's full of timber".

Settlers were just as guilty as prospectors and loggers. In spite of the clearly visible annual toll of fires and the "nuisance" they caused the general population, it remained common practice well into this century whenever settlers were expanding a townsite or preparing new farmland to wait to begin setting clearing fires until May or June when the ground was sure to have dried out after the winter rains. While this practice guaranteed that the brush and scrub timber would burn, it also insured that those setting the fires would have little or no control over the extent of the blaze. It was a contractor clearing land for development near False Creek in June 1886 who was responsible for the

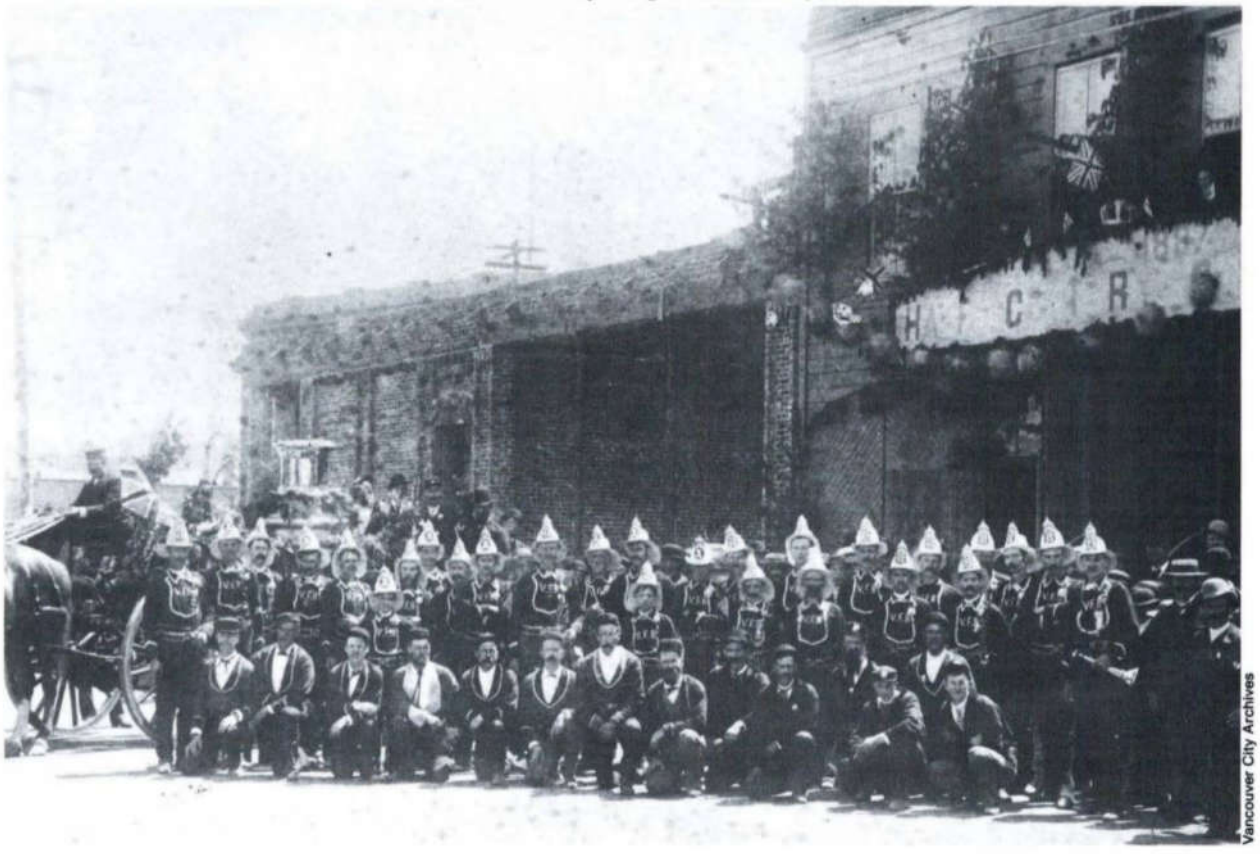
destruction of the young city of Vancouver. And it was a couple of ranchers near Nelson in May 1906 who were trying to clear themselves a little farmland who cleared instead the twenty-mile long stretch of forest on the north side of Kootenay Lake.

Many fires were caused by simple ignorance on the part of settlers. In his memoir, *Rainbow Chasers*, published in 1982, Ervin MacDonald tells of his father taking a new hired man with him in August 1909 to help clear a trail from the family's ranch in the Bridge Lake country eastward to link up with a trail down the North Thompson River. The hired man, eager to do "something to make the going easier next day" through the dense tangle of underbrush and deadfalls, set fire to the bush. The two men and their horses only escaped by wading into a tiny lake and standing in water up to their necks with wet blankets over their heads. They remained there for thirty-six hours because the fire burned through the topsoil and accumulated humus right down to the bare rock, and it was too hot to walk on. This fire burned through the district for the next two and a half months.

A 1906 fire on Texada Island was started by a Chinese kitchen helper in a logging camp who was sent out to cut firewood for the cookstove. When the resin in the log he was sawing kept gumming up his saw, he tried to burn the resin off. Within a matter of minutes there was an acre of forest blazing, and the logging company, unable to contain it, was forced to evacuate men and equipment.

The early newspapers, while holding lumbermen and settlers responsible for specific blazes, laid the major blame for forest fires on lightning, prospectors and native Indians. While lightning has always been a proven cause of fires especially in the southern interior of the province, and there was plenty of documented evidence to lay the blame on prospectors, the case against the native peoples is very difficult to prove. William Shannon, who described himself as a "timber expert", wrote in 1906 that he had known Indians to set fires to drive game out of hiding. Shannon was reporting to the Geological Survey of Canada on the fires of 1868 when the entire west coast of the continent had undergone a drought from April to November. Fires that started in Oregon in July, according to Shannon, swept up into B.C., destroying forests in the Fraser Valley and the Kootenays. Other fires had ravaged the Gulf Islands and the Cariboo. "For two months," he wrote, "people along the coast

The Vancouver volunteer fire brigade, Dominion Day 1887.



Vancouver City Archives

used artificial light in the daytime. Water travel had to stop because of the visibility". Shannon, however, was writing thirty-eight years after the events and he apparently only saw the fires in the Fraser Valley. The rest of his report must have been compiled from hearsay.

Recorded incidents of native people deliberately lighting fires to drive out game show that they had some knowledge of back-firing techniques and that they chose the sites of their fires with some care, a precaution unquestionably due to the vulnerability of the native settlements. Additional evidence of their innocence as the major cause of forest fires lies in the 1886 "Annual Report of the Geological and Natural Survey of Canada" in which George Mercer Dawson cites the example of the virgin forests of the "North Kootanie Pass" which to that time was used only by Indians. Here the trees were green and the land untouched by fire, while the forests along the Crow's Nest Pass which had been used by white men for several years were "represented only by bleaching or blackened trunks".

In August 1904 the *Vancouver Province* was willing to concede that careless white campers were now the major cause of preventable forest fires. "Careless and lazy siwashes", who used to find that taking "the trouble to thoroughly extinguish a camp fire was more unwelcome than a conflagration", had been reformed by repeated punishment so that they now seldom caused fires. Yet there are few instances of fines or prison sentences handed out to native Indians for setting fires in the preceding twenty years, so that their record of careless and lazy behaviour must predate that time, if such behaviour existed.

Although there was little concern about fire prevention among the general population in B.C.'s pioneer years, the Legislative Assembly in Victoria passed a Bush Fire Act in 1874 which provided for fines up to $100 for anyone found responsible for forest fires occurring between June and September. In 1890 it was amended to cover May and October as well, the fines were increased to $150, and it was stipulated that fireguards were to be cut around the perimeter of all clearing fires. But because there was no organization other than the North West Mounted Police to enforce the act, there were few arrests or convictions.

The only forests regularly patrolled at that time lay along the Canadian Pacific Railway and extended for twenty miles on either side of the track. Each twenty-mile stretch was patrolled by one federally supervised forest ranger, the cost of his services borne jointly by the government and the sawmill and logging outfits who had bought the timber limits within the belt. These patrol sections were far too large for one forest ranger to cover adequately, but the rangers were at least able to keep fires started by locomotives to a minimum, and they could initiate prompt action to fight fires within a reasonable distance from the track.

Much of Fernie, British Columbia, was destroyed in a savage fire in 1908.

Provincial Archives of British Columbia

Lumbermen outside this belt had no protection, however, and by 1904 they were beginning to demand some kind of ranger service for other parts of the province. That year a conservative estimate placed timber losses for the whole province at $250,000; 75% of this loss occurred in the province's southwestern quarter where logging was carried on most intensively and the population was densest. Most of the Gulf Islands saw fire that year, and the mainland all the way from Powell River to Coquitlam and the Pitt River area billowed smoke and flames.

Meanwhile, in the patrolled belt along the railway lines, there were dramatic examples of forest saved from destruction. In the Shuswap country, one ranger was able to marshal a large enough crew of firefighters to battle a blaze that was burning along a six-mile front. Michael Carlin, a spokesman for the Columbia River Lumber Company, told the *Victoria Colonist* that they "had to cut a trail through six miles of woods and then 'back-fire' it . . . thus effecting a burned district to perfect the line of defence. On the one side we had a great roaring fire raging through the forest, and on the other, gangs of sturdy woodsmen, clearing and hacking and working desperately to stop the advance of the conflagration". Carlin estimated that 600 million feet of timber in the path of the fire had been saved by their action.

B.C.'s lumbermen were impressed by Carlin's timber preservation, but what impressed them even more was the fact that his company had lost none of its buildings or equipment. Coastal logging companies had not fared as well: Bull's logging camp on one of the Surge Islands in Knight Inlet had been completely destroyed with a loss of $6,000 in buildings and machinery; Moses Ireland had lost $4,000 when his camp at Bull Point on Smith Sound was burned out. When fire trapped most of the crew and equipment of the B.C. Timber and Trading Company's Camp F near present day Powell River, the courageous engineer of the logging "locie" took a train through the flames to bring out the men and the donkey engine; the rest of the equipment and the camp itself were reduced to ashes. If regular patrols could reduce this kind of loss, the coast lumbermen were determined to have this service extended to their areas as well.

Carlin was part of a delegation of lumbermen who went to Victoria in the spring of 1905 to demand the establishment of a provincial "fire brigade". Although the government's official stance was that the prevention of forest fires was the problem of the forest industry alone, the legislature responded by appointing four fire wardens to oversee the 100,000 square miles of forest in the southern part of the province.

The new wardens were put to the test in the summer of 1906 when nearly 3.7 million acres of marketable timber were lost. Where the timber was all ready for shipment, the losses hurt even more; at McNair's Shingle Mill, six miles up North Vancouver's Lynn Canyon, for example, $10,000 worth of cedar shingle bolts went up in smoke. The wardens were able to show that most of the lumbermen's losses had been caused by careless practices, and they recommended further legislation to clamp down on the industry. An 1896 amendment to the Bush Fire Act had made it mandatory for railway locomotives to be provided with steel or iron mesh screens on their smoke stacks to catch flying sparks, but no legislation covered the operation of stationary engines. After the disastrous fires of 1906, the Legislature passed a new amendment requiring spark arresters on all engines operating in the woods, and making it mandatory for logging outfits to hire watchmen to patrol for two hours after the daily shutdown during the fire season. But no move was made to force logging companies to shut down their forest operations in periods of high fire hazard, and there is no record of any voluntary shutdowns.

In spite of the amendment, the fire losses climbed again in 1908. Included in the toll that year was the destruction of the town of Fernie. In mid-July fire had broken out nearby in a timber lease belonging to the Elk Lumber Company, and as the month progressed, the fire slowly approached the town along both sides of the river. As there was little wind, the danger seemed limited. On Friday 31 July the attention of the town's 3,000 residents was diverted to the nearby Coal Creek mine where two miners were entombed after a cave-in, and so on the morning of 1 August when a stiff wind suddenly came up they were not prepared for the disaster that was almost upon them. By mid-morning the front of the fire was advancing rapidly on the town, and the fire brigade was put on alert. Then without warning at 2:00 p.m. the Fort Steele Brewery on the extreme western edge of the town burst into flames. The brigade rushed to the rescue, but no sooner had the hoses been rolled out than a shout went up behind them. "Old Town", where the Italian miners lived, was blazing. The firemen rushed their equipment back to town and while they played their hoses over the business district, they urged their fellow townsmen to get out hoses and wet down their houses. For a short while this seemed to be effective, but suddenly the flames began leaping from street to street, and the town was doomed.

Fortunately, the Great Northern Railway was able to make up a train to shuttle the townspeople to a sandy cut-bank four miles down the line out of the fire's reach, but eighteen people died while fleeing from the flames. Although a number of buildings somehow escaped the blaze, the heat and wind generated by the fire had been so intense that not even ashes of the others remained. The same fire also swept into the nearby town of Hosmer, gobbling up a portion of it

Firemen attack a bush fire at Kitsilano, Vancouver, circa 1910.

before a sudden shift in the wind direction carried the flames back into the forest.

For the average B.C. town of that period, fighting a forest fire was an almost impossible task. In fact, even putting up a fight against an ordinary domestic blaze was extremely difficult. Where water was available in nearby lakes or streams, volunteer fire brigades manned hoses and pumps drawn by horse teams; where it was unavailable, they had to haul a tank-wagon as well to the site of the blaze. But there was no province-wide fire-fighting system. Each settlement had to organize its own. When Barkerville burned in September 1868 the citizens were helpless because they had neither a fire brigade nor equipment of any kind. Vancouver didn't become formally organized to fight fires until after the disastrous blaze of 1886 and didn't acquire motorized fire engines until 1911, although they were available as early as 1905. But even the best organized fire brigade would have had little chance of saving either Vancouver in 1886 or Fernie when it burned in 1908 because the fires that destroyed them were driven by high winds and they approached on a very wide front. And in both cases the fires had "crowned" or risen to the treetops where they travelled much faster than at ground level, leaping easily over cleared areas and streams. The heat of these fires was so intense that buildings ahead of them literally exploded in flames before the fire itself arrived.

Until the end of the 1930s, even the logging and lumber mill companies who drafted their employees into impromptu fire brigades during the dry season had limited success fighting forest fires, because they had only axes, mattocks and shovels for tools; aid from donkey engines and water pumps was limited to the more accessible areas. But in the majority of cases, the fires were already too widespread and entrenched when the crews arrived on the scene to fight them, so that the largest factor in control was not human effort but changes in the weather.

Where neither lives nor equipment were threatened, fires in remote areas were simply ignored. For instance, the *Vancouver Province* reported on page one of its 10 May 1906 edition that "a great fire was raging back of the logging camp of the Nanaimo Lumber Company between Chatham Point and Elk Bay on Discovery Passage". The news had been brought in by the captain of the steamer *Cassiar* who estimated that it had been burning for a week or more because it already covered several square miles. It was only doused by rain at the end of May.

In 1911, as the result of a Royal Commission on Timber and Forestry, B.C.'s Bush Fire Act became the Forest Fire Act, and the protection branch was reorganized to cover six mountain divisions and four coast divisions, each headed by a fire warden. Each of these divisions was subdivided into ten or twelve

smaller patrol districts of about 160,000 acres of timber, presided over by a district fire warden, who was empowered to hire the men necessary to fight fires. The pay offered was 30¢ per hour, and since these firemen worked fourteen and sixteen-hour shifts, they often took home as much as $5 a day. The work they were required to do was probably the most brutal of any to be found on the labour scene, yet the newspapers were quick to deplore their high wages: the lure of such easy money, they said, would incite men to set fires in order to be paid to fight them.

This fear of incendiarists had begun to develop in Western Canada in the last years of the nineteenth century, largely as a spillover from the United States where the anarchist and socialist movements had become highly vocal. American prospectors, joining the rush to the new Kootenay mining boom in the mid-1890s and to the Klondike a few years later, brought their suspicion of both socialists and anarchists and spread tales of their use of arson as a weapon of protest. Western Canadian fears were increased after 1906 when a colony of Doukhobors moved to the Kootenays. Originally transplanted to Saskatchewan from Russia, a radical section of the sect had already demonstrated their propensity for arson and other forms of destruction.

By 1911, however, the province was looking at a new kind of incendiarist. By that time, B.C. had entered a period of high unemployment. The real estate and building boom had collapsed, the mining and lumbering companies were having difficulty finding export markets, and employers were cutting costs by replacing unionized labourers with low-paid Chinese and Japanese workers.

When the number of forest fires continued to climb each year, forestry officials began blaming more and more of them on the unemployed, reasoning that since most of the jobless were union men and therefore most likely to be socialists, they were using arson to protest the capitalist system that had done them out of jobs. The newspapers were more realistic: for them the increase in fires was the result of offering labourers 30¢ an hour to put fires out. Offer less money, they wrote, and there will be fewer fires.

The problem reached a high point, with British Columbia's residents seeing arsonists behind every tree, in the summer of 1914, one of the worst fire seasons on record. In the southern half of the province, the mean temperature for July, August and September was 2°F. above normal; the precipitation was 2½ inches below normal, enough to leave the forests kindling dry. There were 1,832 fires reported that year, a jump of

Vancouver firemen with their first auto hose wagon, 1911.

Vancouver City Archives

40% over 1910, the previous all-time high. Of these, 169 fires were known to have been caused by lightning, 50 could be definitely traced to logging company carelessness, 487 could be laid to careless prospectors, hunters, fishermen, picnickers, floating labourers and hoboes, and 42 were definitely proven to be incendiary in origin. But there remained another 367 fires of unknown origin, and these the newspapers blamed on the unemployed. The outbreak of World War I in August 1914 alleviated the job situation somewhat, but high unemployment continued throughout the war because the west coast lacked ships to get its products to market and faced discriminatory rail freight rates. Cases of arson in the woods continued to turn up in the courts during these years but they failed to make newspaper headlines because war news had priority.

While the war didn't decrease the number of fires believed to be incendiary in origin, it did provide the forest service with a new weapon for fighting fire: the reconnaissance plane. To the Department of Lands, which at that time included the Forestry Branch, this type of plane was the answer to the greatest problem of the fire season. As early as the 1904 Shuswap fire, it had been demonstrated that fires located promptly could generally be fought successfully, and that patrols on foot or horseback or even railway speeder or motor launch were not adequate for the task of early detection. A spotter plane, however, could cover the same areas much faster and more thoroughly.

Since there were few fields where planes could land in the forested parts of the province, but there was no shortage of bodies of water, the Department of Lands looked for a plane that could land on water. Their search took them to the Hoffar Motor Boat Company on Vancouver's Coal Harbour.

When the Minister of Lands, T.D. "Duff" Pattullo, visited the Hoffar brothers in the summer of 1918, they were at work on their second plane, a flying boat or hydroplane. (Their first, a seaplane, had been tested over the city on 16 July 1917, but had been destroyed when it taxied into a submerged log.) The new plane's fuselage was to sit boat-like in the water with large pontoons on either side to support its 42-foot wingspread. The compartment for the pilot and his passenger was set forward of the wings, and the engine — a 100 hp Roberts capable of climbing to 3,000 feet in a mere ten minutes — was located overhead between the wings.

Pattullo offered the Hoffars a contract to lease the new plane for forestry patrol work, thus making B.C.'s Forestry Branch the first in Canada to enter the air age. The first test flight over Vancouver went off without a hitch with Flight-Commander Herbert McKenzie of the R.A.F. at the controls. He suggested certain control adjustments, the Hoffars complied, and the contract with the government was signed.

On 4 September 1918, Lieutenant Victor A. Bishop, on leave from the air force, made the second test flight, but at 1,500 feet over the city's west end, the engine conked out, the plane went into a spin and crashed into the roof of a house at 755 Bute Street, the home of Dr. J.C. Farrish. Bishop landed unhurt in the doctor's top floor bath tub, but the plane was demolished, and the Hoffars lost their chance to usher the Forestry Branch into the air age.

In 1921, the government tried again, budgeting $20,000 for the lease of planes to pinpoint fires and then rush fire fighters and equipment to the sites, chiefly on Vancouver Island. Unfortunately, the load capacity of the aircraft — the government had settled for WWI leftovers — limited their usefulness, and they were unable to operate in heavy smoke conditions; as a result, in 1925 the annual outlay on the plane service was cancelled as too costly. Two years later the government reversed this decision because faster, more maneuverable planes had become available; from then on, planes became increasingly important in the battle against forest fires. In the same year, the Forest Service acquired eighty light-weight gasoline-powered pumps, light enough for two men to carry, thereby making it possible to pump water from remote streams and lakes to fight fires. About the same time they also equipped the motor launches used for patrol with wireless telephones.

Yet while the Forest Service was improving its capacity to spot fires in their early stages and to prevent small fires from becoming big ones, the cost to the province of uncontrolled fires continued to climb. In 1918 the loss of logging and mill equipment and in merchantable timber was $609,000; in 1919 it rose to $960,000; the next two years were wet ones and the loss in each year was less than half that of 1919, but 1922 made up for them with a loss of $2,124,000. By July of that year, author Bertrand Sinclair, cruising in the straits, could report "the whole coast on fire" with "fine white ash falling on the deck" of his yacht. Two million board feet of merchantable timber went up in smoke — the equal of one normal year's cut by the province's logging companies. When manufactured, it would have sold for $75 million. Economists estimated that in the previous fifty years, half of the continent's forest reserves had been consumed by fire and that all of B.C.'s forest would be gone in another forty years. Studies also showed that more than just timber was at stake: the water supplies of a growing number of towns were threatened; reduced fertility of burned-over forest lands made them virtually useless for agriculture; and both the mining and fishing industries were endangered by the mounting fire toll. Preventing fire was becoming everybody's business.

Meanwhile, by the mid-1920s there were only half as many active timber licenses as there had been twenty years earlier, and modernization in the remaining lum-

A test flight over Vancouver in September 1918 ended with the pilot falling through a roof into a top floor bath tub. The aircraft, which was to have been used for fire spotting, was a total wreck.

ber companies and in the railways had reduced the number of fires from those sources. Beginning around the turn of the century, locomotives had been converting from the use of coal to oil, so that in 1928 fire patrols along the railways were officially cancelled. By the beginning of WWI most locomotive skidroads and poleroads had been replaced by steel rail systems, and donkey engines were being converted to gasoline or diesel fuel, greatly reducing the fire hazard.

It was becoming obvious that the reasons for the steadily increasing number of fires and their mounting costs had to be found elsewhere, and ultimately the blame was placed on the new mobility of the population. B.C.'s depressed economy and heavy unemployment had worsened after the 1918 armistice, but by 1922 prosperity was increasing again. More working men were able to buy automobiles, and as the number of cars increased, the government was forced to begin its long-promised road building and improvement program.

New roads changed the holiday habits of B.C. families. People who had formerly taken a few days' boat or train excursion for their summer vacation or booked a week at an organized summer camp could now take a far cheaper and longer holiday by loading their camping gear on top of the family auto and setting off for the wilderness. But except for the posting of a few signboards and mileage markers announcing "Small fires cost nothing to put out. Big fires cost money — YOUR money", no real effort had been made to educate the public in safe camping methods. Brief campaigns in 1923 and 1927 to restrict smoking in forested areas during the fire season were ignored by the public.

A 1922 law gave the Forestry Branch the right to close districts where fires were burning or where conditions were hazardous, and a 1926 order-in-council allowed them to prohibit the lighting of fires where they were considered dangerous, but enforcement was difficult. There were far too few wardens to give adequate policing, and they found it almost impossible to persuade the public to accept restrictions of their activities.

The saddest example of disregard for authority where fire was concerned happened in July 1926 when an RCMP corporal just west of Kootenay Crossing on the Banff-Windermere Highway stopped an east-bound car to warn the driver to go no further than the Crossing itself because of fires beyond it. The occupants of the car were two Saskatchewan families, the Watts and the Nesbitts, home-bound after two weeks of camping in B.C. Because a delay would mean that Watt would be late returning to his job as CPR agent in the town of Dysart, the two families ignored the corporal's warning. Half a mile east of the crossing, their Ford sedan, overloaded with camping gear and

Vancouver City Archives.

Town residents seek refuge on the water during a forest fire at Port Neville, B.C., June 1925.

its six passengers, was unable to climb a steep hill. Climbing out of the car, the men attempted to turn it around "by hand", but while they were doing this, the fire jumped the road behind them. When the women and children were too frightened to climb back into the car and make a dash back to the crossing, Watt left them and ran back through the flames to get help. He survived, but his wife and two children and Nesbitt's wife died of suffocation by the roadside, although there was a small lake only one hundred yards away where they could have found safety. Nesbitt survived though badly burned. Later, both men insisted they had never been warned of the danger.

The first real attempts to educate the public in forest fire prevention were made by the B.C. chapter of the Canadian Forestry Association formed in 1925. Their programs were largely responsible for the decrease in fires started by human carelessness, from 1,655 in 1925 to 1,354 in 1930, a drop of approximately 18%. Fires of incendiary origin also dropped during this period, possibly reflecting increased employment.

At the beginning of the 1930s, however, the economy of the province abruptly declined again, and the government, attempting to balance its budget, decreed in 1931 that forest fires were to be fought only if the timber was commercially valuable. This decision gave them an excuse to cut back on the forestry patrol staff just before the next fire season from 260 to 40 men, and to suspend the fire fighting fund which had been the joint venture of government and the lumber industry. Holders of private timber limits would in future have to fend for themselves when fire threatened.

Although justified as budget-balancers, these measures were designed to battle the incendiary problem. While the depression had immediately reduced the number of campers and holidayers in the woods in summer, it had raised the number of unemployed out on the roads searching for jobs. Most of these jobless anticipated work in fire season, but in 1930 and 1931 there were so many of them that only a small percentage were taken on by the Forestry Branch, in spite of the fact that there were far more fires in these years than in previous ones. Statistics released in the winter of 1931-32, however, showed that at least 25% of all the preventable fires in the previous year had been deliberately set, probably by unemployed men determined to have work fighting them. To discourage arsonists, the government raised the penalty for persons caught setting fires to fifteen years in prison, but as the depression worsened, the threat of jail was no deterrent to the jobless. In fact, it was simply a guarantee of food and lodging at government expense.

When fire broke out in August 1931 near Oliver in the Okanagan Valley, Attorney General Robert H. Pooley, "shocked" to learn that it had been set by a firebug, "declared that the government was ready and eager to pay a reward of $500 to anyone who supplied information leading to a conviction for incendiarism".

According to Pooley, those who were setting the fires were all communist agitators making gestures against capitalism.

Pooley's offer of a reward brought results just four days later when two forestry officers captured an incendiarist in the act of setting a fire. He was Arnold Andre, a young Swiss, who was immediately committed for trial. In court, it turned out that Andre had been hired to fight a fire in the bush north of Bridesville in the Rock Creek area, but on the morning of 17 August he had hidden when the other men marched off to work at 5:30 a.m. An hour and a half later he'd been spotted a mile on the other side of the camp near the remains of a campfire. He ran into the woods when the foresters called to him, then came out again to ask directions back to camp. When they pointed out the way, he still "hedged" suspiciously, and as a result, they arrested him for setting the fire. Evidence during the trial finally showed that Andre's fire-setting had been an attempt to provide himself with some warmth in the chill mountain morning before carrying on with his flight from a job he had found unendurable. The case against him for arson collapsed although he was jailed for lighting a fire in a closed area.

In a parallel case, it was discovered in court that the accused man was severely retarded, and that in his eagerness to please the arresting officers, he had pleaded guilty to lighting all the fires within a hundred mile radius. Few genuine arsonists were actually caught during these years because of the 1932 reduction in the forestry patrol staff and the vastness and ruggedness of the terrain that the remaining staff had to cover. Meanwhile, arson took an increasingly heavy toll on marketable timber because of the government's policy limiting fire fighting to commercially valuable timber stands; obviously an unemployed man trying to make a job for himself was only going to set fire to timber that would require a fire crew.

By the beginning of the 1933 fire season, a plan had been devised in Victoria to make use of the unemployed in fire fighting with little cost to the taxpayers: jobless men were to be housed in forestry relief camps and given $10.50 per month plus their board to do the work that had paid 30¢ an hour only a few years earlier. This solution to the problem only brought more problems because these men bore little resemblance to those sturdy woodsmen described by Michael Carlin in 1905, "clearing and hacking and working desperately to stop the advance of the conflagration". The men of the relief camps felt no responsibility to put out fires, and in some cases are believed to have actually set more of them. Within a few years, the government was forced to increase fire patrols and raise the wages of suppressant crews in order to get the job done.

In spite of the steady increase in fire damage over the years, logging companies had stubbornly insisted on keeping their camps operating even in the driest summers, and at last it became the government's task to bring in closure laws. The first of these was passed in 1922, and it was strengthened several times in succeeding years, and used effectively for the first time in 1938 during the disastrous Vancouver Island fires.

It was these fires which forced the government to re-evaluate its fire prevention and suppression policies. Most of the battle was fought by the more than one thousand loggers employed by the island's logging companies, using those companies' equipment; the Forest Branch met the crisis with equipment worth less than $15 thousand and a half dozen men. Yet this area had produced $5 million in timber royalties and $1 million in timber taxation in the previous fifteen years. Forest royalties for the whole province had, in fact, been treated as general revenue, and in the previous twenty-five years, three-quarters of all forest revenues — estimated at some $50 million — had gone to balance B.C.'s budget. By 1938 only $360 thousand or 10% of annual forest revenues was going into a forest protection fund; the forest industry made up the balance of the $500 thousand the government paid out for suppression that year, as well as paying their own crews and providing equipment. The cost would have been higher except that inaccessible fires were ignored. Losses amounted to $2.2 million.

The Second World War was the final catalyst needed to change the forest fire policies of both government and industry. As manpower became scarce and forest products became more valuable, the emphasis had to be placed on prevention rather than suppression. Air patrols took a higher priority; forest rangers were given improved equipment and training; forest closures became routine during periods of high hazard; and the massive program of public education in fire prevention that was undertaken at this time became the keystone of all future policies.

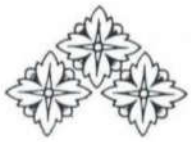
Forest fires are still a normal part of B.C.'s scenery in a dry summer. There is still arson, especially during times of high unemployment, and careless logging practices still wipe out stands of valuable timber in hours that have spent a hundred years maturing. And fire losses are still staggering. But fire is no longer the biggest threat to British Columbia's timber resources. ♦

Betty C. Keller, a frequent contributor to The Beaver, lives at Sechelt, British Columbia.

"In the month of September, 1819, I was introduced to his lordship, and I shall never forget the impression that my patient made upon me. I saw all the features of consumption traced upon his face, and I must have expressed this by my own (one of the most treacherous ever allotted to man), for as soon as we left the room, the surgeon said to me, 'I see you think it is all over with him. You are right, I am afraid' . . ."

The Death of Selkirk

The Founder of the Red River Colony Searched for a Cure to His Fatal Illness



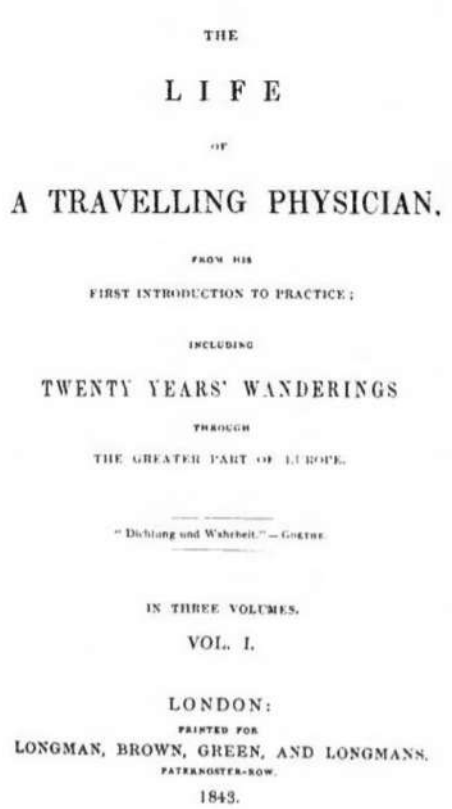
By HUBERT G. MAYES

The frontispiece of Lefevre's The Life of a Travelling Physician, a fine nineteenth century view showing the Chateau de Pau on the hill at the left and the foothills of the Pyrenees.

In a "Note on Sources" at the end of his work *Lord Selkirk of Red River,* John Morgan Gray indicates how fortunate he has been in coming upon the memoirs of Sir George William Lefevre. As a young doctor, Lefevre accompanied Lord and Lady Selkirk to southern France and attended the Earl until his death on 8 April 1820. The recorded memories of a person so intimately associated with Lord Selkirk would have been an interesting find under any circumstances. For Canadian historians, however, they are of particular value because they help to fill a serious gap in the story of Selkirk's life. Until Gray's discovery of Lefevre's work, little was known about the Selkirks' travels in France or the last months of Lord Selkirk's life in Pau. Lady Selkirk's letters to her sister-in-law, Lady Katherine Halkett, would have provided a rich source of information about this period, but they were lost when a fire destroyed the family home at St. Mary's Isle, Scotland, in 1940.

Lefevre's memoirs were published in London in 1843. The title of the three-volume work is *The Life of a Travelling Physician, from his first introduction to practice; including twenty years' wanderings through the greater part of Europe.* The section pertaining to the Selkirks takes up about fifty pages of the first volume. An unprepared reader might be struck by the faint air of mystery surrounding the work; it was published anonymously, and Selkirk is identified only as Lord — or "his Lordship" or "my patient" or "the invalid". There is no doubt however about the authorship (Lefevre acknowledged the work later) or about the identity of Lord —. According to Gray, anecdotes in one of Lefevre's medical publications as well as a mention in the Selkirk Papers confirm that the patient was indeed Lord Selkirk.

Gray skillfully weaves many details taken from the Lefevre narrative into his own work. Taken collectively, these details constitute a faithful summary of the doctor's story. However, Gray seldom lets Lefevre speak for himself. The purpose of this article is to restore the immediacy of the original work by quoting selected passages. These excerpts, all relating to Lord Selkirk,



THE

LIFE

OF

A TRAVELLING PHYSICIAN,

FROM HIS

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THROUGH

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"Dichtung und Wahrheit."—Goethe.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, AND LONGMANS,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1843.

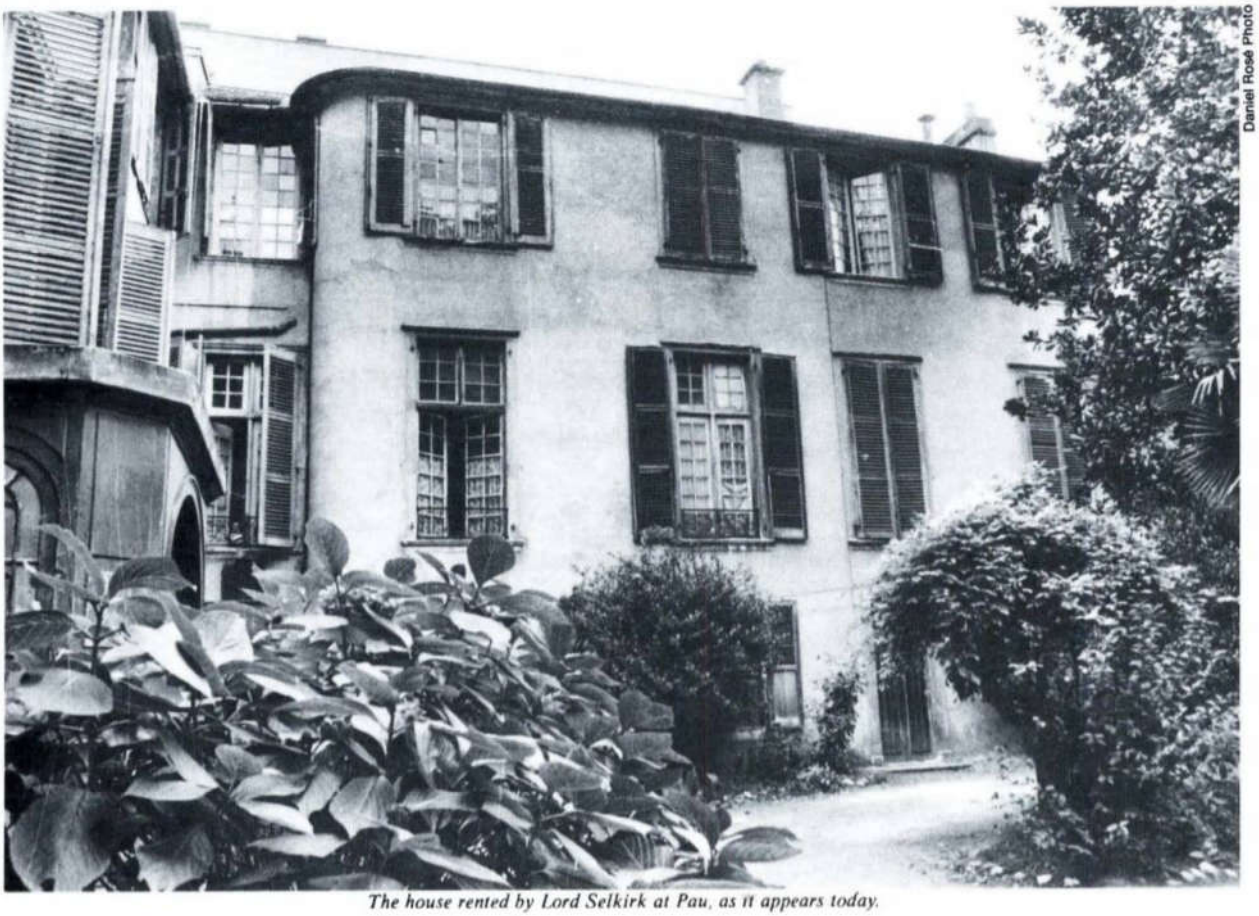
will not only provide details which Gray has omitted, but will also give the reader direct acquaintance with a man who was uniquely placed to observe Selkirk in the final stages of his illness.

Lefevre was born in Berkhampstead, Hertfordshire, in 1798 and was apprenticed to a practitioner of medicine in Shropshire. He studied medicine in Edinburgh, at Guy's and St. Thomas Hospitals in London, and in Aberdeen, where he graduated in 1819. After a serious illness (the *Dictionary of National Biography* mentions the threat of "pulmonary disease"), Lefevre was advised to go abroad. A London doctor told him of a "gentleman" who was going to Spain and might be persuaded to take a "medical man" with him. Lefevre was delighted at the prospect of becoming "physician to a Lord," and in a few days everything was arranged. The eminent patient — Thomas Douglas, fifth Earl of Selkirk — was exhausted from his bitter legal battles with the North West Company in Canada and suffering from advanced tuberculosis. He had been persuaded to seek relief from his illness in a warmer, drier climate. Valencia seemed to be the favoured destination, but Toulouse was also being considered.

In spite of his youth and inexperience, Lefevre quickly came to some accurate conclusions about his patient's condition:

> In the month of September, 1819, I was introduced to his lordship, and I shall never forget the impression that my patient made upon me. I saw all the features of consumption traced upon his face, and I must have expressed this by my own (one of the most treacherous ever allotted to man), for as soon as we left the room, the surgeon said to me, "I see you think it is all over with him. You are right, I am afraid; but still he may live some time."
>
> If I had none of those bashful fearful feelings, which some anticipate in their first introduction to those of a superior rank, still I had very different sentiments after this interview from those which I had previously entertained. I found his lordship mild and condescending, affable in his manners, and he wore an agreeable smile upon his face which was at the same time captivating and dignified. I thought that I could trace even in the lengthened mien and haggard appearance no ordinary marks of intellect. There was something, however, restless about him; an agitation of mind, evinced by his bodily movements; and a certain decision in his tone, which, perhaps, bordered upon obstinacy. His was a mind which evidently could not remain a moment unoccupied. There was no approach to a state of rest. Such was my first impression, and it was a true one. This was the feature in the composition which alone brought us into contact, for the feverish brain had destroyed the outward man, and was now gnawing the vitals.

Shortly after this meeting Lefevre travelled to Dover, where he was soon joined by Lord and Lady Selkirk and their two daughters, Isabella, 8, and Katherine, 2. The eldest child, Dunbar James, Lord Daer, was being left to attend school and to spend his holidays with relatives. The journey began badly: Lefevre records that "the wind blew fresh, and almost in our teeth, so that we were seven hours in crossing; and physician, as well as patient, suffered cruelly from sea-sickness." That evening in Calais Lefevre "commenced practice" by prescribing a "composing draught" for his Lordship, which he suspected was never taken. The next morning the party set out for Paris. Lefevre was assigned to the calash which was to follow the Selkirks' carriage — an arrangement which annoyed him because it meant that he had to sit beside the "femme de chambre". This person (who is never mentioned again) probably doubled as general servant and nursemaid. Six days later the carriages drove into Paris. "We proceeded by slow journies," says Lefevre, "seldom starting before eleven, nor travelling after dinner, for my patient was in too weak a state to allow of forced marches."



The house rented by Lord Selkirk at Pau, as it appears today.

Before leaving England the young doctor had been requested to consult with a Dr. M — in Paris regarding his patient's conditon. He records the event as follows:

> I shall never forget the first consultation. Being the junior physician, I had to write the prescription. I thought it would never end: it occupied one side of a sheet of foolscap. It reminded me of Dr. Paris's apothecary, who shot out all the arrows which he could, in hopes that some might hit. Lady — took it up and laughed. "What is all this to do?" she asked me. "To do his Lordship good, my Lady." The prescription was made up and the physician fee'd. I found this consultation a much less formidable thing than I had imagined. We were both agreed as to the nature of the case, which I thought did me credit at the time — a case of galloping consumption!

Six days later they set out for the south, making their first stop at Etampes. Selkirk's condition did not seem to be improving:

> 'Twas a cold, dreary evening, and we were not very comfortably lodged. The frequent coughing of my patient, who slept in an adjoining room, discomposed me very much, so that I rose, and rapping at his door, gained admittance. Her Ladyship smiled at my alarm, and assured me it was nothing at all, for such fits were very frequent. I persuaded her to get him to take a little poppy syrup, which seemed to soothe him for the rest of the night.

The travellers reached Orleans the following evening and Tours on the fifth day after leaving Paris. Lefevre was anxious to apply leeches to his patient and to have him remain quiet for a day or two. When the journey resumed, the carriages passed through miles of rich vineyards. Selkirk's illness did not prevent him from taking a keen interest in local methods of cultivation:

> The climate is so fine, that agriculture is reduced to scratching the ground with a wooden plough, and his Lordship, always thinking of the means of colonisation, stopped his carriage to examine this instrument, as we saw an octogenarian chief skimming over the surface, aided by two cows, apparently

Hubert Mayes Photo

A view of Orthez showing the fortified medieval bridge.

as old as himself. It had received no improvement in forty years; it being just the same plough used by the peasantry before the Revolution.

The party reached Bordeaux on the first of October and Lefevre took stock of the situation:

> The weather had particularly favoured us; we had no rain or cold during the whole of the route, except on the evening we quitted Paris. Every thing proceeded as well as could have been desired. I was much pleased with my patient, and I flattered myself that he was satisfied with me. He had certainly improved upon the journey; his spirits were much better, and his cough less troublesome. I attributed it all to the Iceland moss. His mind was diverted from the melancholy which was preying upon him by the excitement which a journey always creates; and, if it be only on that account, it is sufficient to warrant an invalid to leave his home in hopes of curing his complaint.

Lefevre felt that a consultation was necessary, but "no physician was to be found at Bordeaux of real English education: unhappy town!" When he proposed that the advice of an eminent local doctor be obtained, the Selkirks objected. Further insistence was pointless:

> I shrugged up my shoulders, which I had now learned to do pretty well, and pleaded my inexperience. "You have had great success," said her Ladyship, "and this medicine has done wonders for us: we want no consultation."

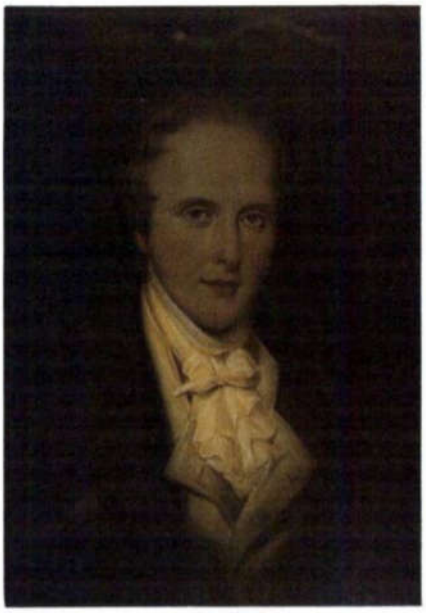
Lefevre was asked however to make the acquaintance of a Dr. Farboucher in order to inquire about the best climate for an invalid. He learned that Pau was recommended by some and that Valencia seemed to have a "universal reputation". Farboucher's own preference was Toulouse. Favourably impressed by the French doctor (contrary to his expectations), Lefevre asked for an opinion on his patient's condition:

> When I detailed to him the symptoms of the case, he shrugged up his shoulders, and said, *"C'est toute la même chose."* I mentioned the treatment I was employing, and when I spoke of the blue pill, he shrugged up his shoulders again, and said, *"C'est trop fort pour ce pays-ci."* . . . Dr. Farboucher told me that the English faculty made great mistakes in supposing that climate had no power on the action of medicine. The idea did not strike me so forcibly at the time, as it has done since, and it is one well worthy of investigation.

Lefevre's curiosity about scientific matters was matched by Selkirk's interest in agriculture and political economy. The wine harvest was in progress in the Bordeaux region, and the Earl was anxious to have the children see the process of wine-making, from the picking of the grapes to the trampling out of the juice:

> The scene was very amusing to the children, and not less so to the father, who lost no opportunity of impressing upon their minds the advantages of studying political economy. Habits and inclinations are not to be put aside at will or pleasure; they are things which are not to be commanded. The ruling passion remains strong in death, and this passion, with him, was political economy and colonisation, and it occupied him in his last moments.

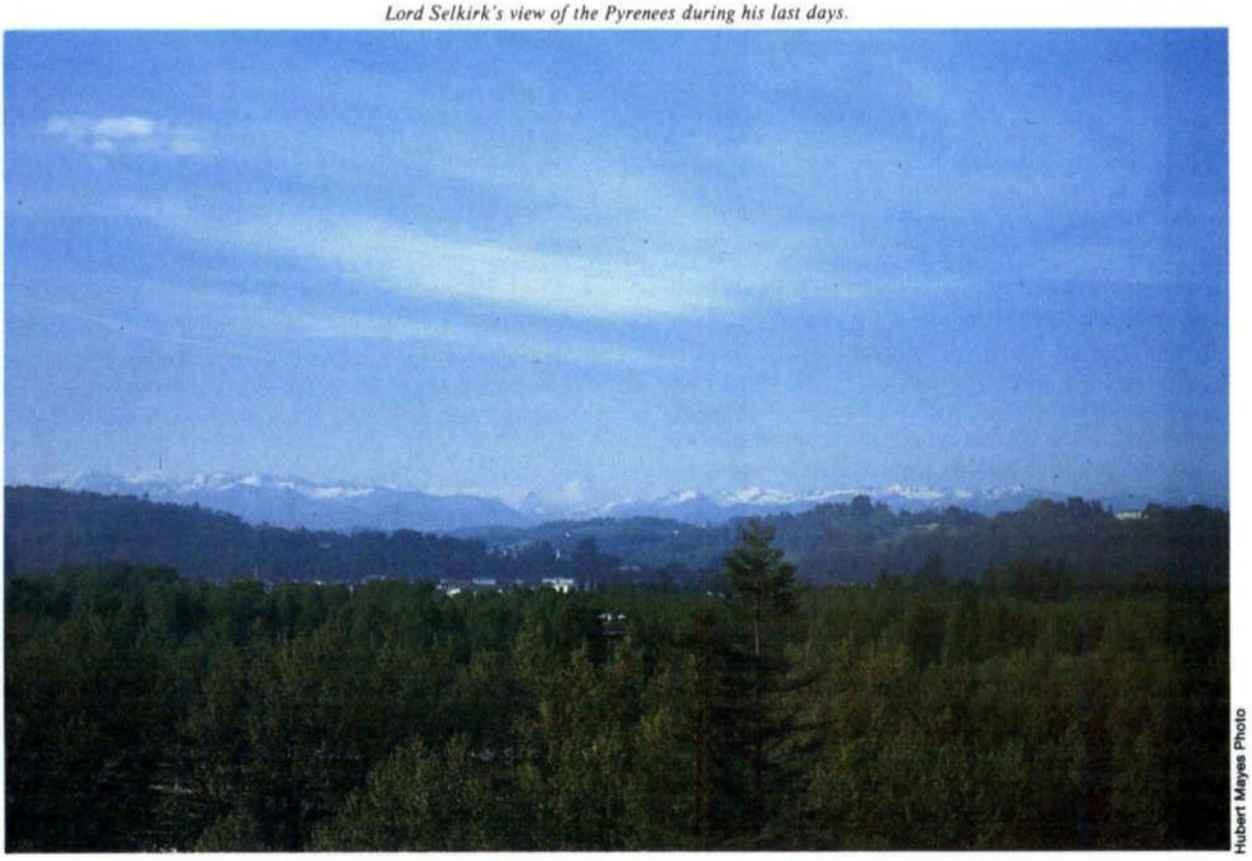
After recording some impressions of Bordeaux, Lefevre resumes his account of the journey. The next stage took the travellers over a corduroy road. "The jolting of the carriage was such," says Lefevre, that the first day's journey fatigued my patient more than the whole distance of our route from Paris to Bordeaux." Several days later the Pyrenees came into view and the party arrived in Pau. It was then the middle of October. The lateness of the season and the beauty



Metro Toronto Library

Lord Selkirk.

Lord Selkirk's view of the Pyrenees during his last days.



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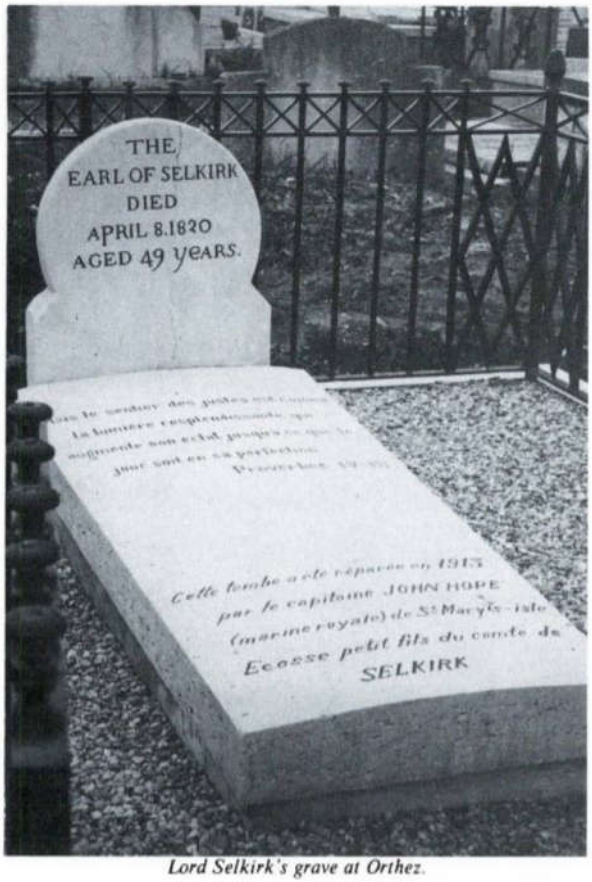


Lord Selkirk's grave at Orthez.

of the surrounding countryside convinced the Selkirks and the doctor that they should spend the winter in Pau. Accordingly they rented a house and settled in. At this point in the narrative Lefevre devotes several pages to the history and climate of Pau. He then returns to the subject of his invalid:

> During the course of the winter, as I found my patient gradually sinking, I requested that some of the native physicians should be consulted; and some well-informed men met me in consultation. They all saw the real nature of the case; but shrugged up their shoulders, and inquired who in God's name had advised us to winter in Pau, and they pointed to the snow-capped Pyrenees. Some indeed recommended us, even in the midst of the winter, to proceed to Marseilles, or at all events to Toulouse. Such was the advice they gave the invalid; but, in my private conferences with them, they all assured me, what I but too well knew, that it was too late to go any where in search of relief.

March came, the mountain snows began to melt, and wild flowers appeared on the hills; but the return of spring could do nothing to change the course of Selkirk's disease. Lefevre writes:

> As nature thus revived, so daily did the invalid droop, and the more his strength failed him, the more did his hopes revive. He suffered much from cough and acute pain in the side, which rendered him occasionally irritable; for the physical was now too much influencing the moral man. Still he projected schemes for the future, and spoke of his intended journey to Geneva, when he had not sufficient strength to walk across his chamber without a supporting arm. He dwelt upon an unmeaning medical phrase, the merits of which I had once discussed with him, and said the stimulus of necessity would not be wanting when the time arrived for calling it into action.

Lefevre was obviously sensitive to the poignancy which the beauties of springtime added to the sadness of his patient's decline, and in the following excerpt it is much more the poet-philosopher than the man of science who is speaking:

> An old sedan chair of Gothic form, and the only one which the town afforded, was put in requisition; and in this he was transported to an adjoining garden, where, seated upon the ridge of a hill, he could admire one of the most delightful prospects which could gladden the heart of man — a genial sun, with cloudless sky, and mountains covered with snow, bounding the view: the young trees in their freshest green: a verdant carpet spread before the feet. The snowdrop unfolding its head; the crocus, with its yellow tinge, contrasting with the pure white of its companion of spring. The wild cherry tree, covered with luxuriant blossoms, contrasting with the green of the weeping willow, planted by its side. The balmy air of spring, so indescribably luscious to those whom sickness has long confined to their chambers — all natures rejoicing, and promising perfection in its kind — he, alone, perhaps, contemplating the hour of his own dissolution.

At last the inevitable moment arrived:

> It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and in the month of April, when the family was assembled at tea. A few days previous an *"avant-coureur,"* not uncommon in consumptive cases, had made its appearance. Slight mental aberration manifested itself for a few hours. This day, however, he was much better, and was stretched upon a sofa, reading a pamphlet, and the children playing by his side. All were in good spirits. The slight delirium and fever of the preceding day had no doubt been of service, and had given a turn to the complaint — perhaps they had produced a crisis. Such things may occur. As we were thus discoursing, the invalid, who had been coughing and expectorating as usual, made an effort to raise himself to clear his throat, but finding that he was too weak, he beckoned me towards him, I hastened to his side, and endeavoured

to lift his head. — The spark was already extinct. He died without a struggle.

At this point one might have expected some expression of sorrow at the loss of a man who, during months of close association, must have become much more than a patient. Some evidence of concern for Lady Selkirk in her difficult situation — a widow with two young children in a foreign land, far from relatives and friends — would also have seemed proper. Instead, the next paragraph begins abruptly: "During the course of the winter we experienced a hurricane, a thing uncommon in the country." There follows a description of the effects of the storm, as well as some comments on the severe frost which set in immediately afterwards. Again the subject of Selkirk's health comes briefly to Lefevre's mind:

> We did not venture out during this period; but as the cold did not penetrate the walls of our house, I had never found my patient in better health or spirits than during this severe weather. This is not uncommon in such cases: a hard and sudden frost braces the system, but the subsequent thaw is fatal. It is perhaps owing to the idea that cold does not affect their lungs as they had anticipated that consumptive patients feel themselves better under such circumstances; for much is due to imagination.

After a page or two devoted to various apsects of life in and around Pau, Lefevre writes, "After the fatal catastrophe, and previous to our quitting Pau, I took the opportunity of exploring the Lower Pyrenees." The description of this excursion takes up several pages. We are then brought back to the Selkirk story with a brief account of the funeral:

> Though Pau gave birth to a Protestant prince, yet there was now no church or *cimetière* for those of the Protestant persuasion, and consequently it was decided that -- should be buried at Orthez. I escorted the body to this town, and it was received with great marks of respect by the good inhabitants. An elderly minister performed the service, and all the good and respectable folks in the town followed the body from the church to the grave. A small stone, with an inscription, marks the precise spot.

This passage is followed by a lyrical description of the magnificent countryside between Pau and Orthez, a distance of about 40 kilometres. After evoking the delights of spring in the foothills of the Pyrenees, Lefevre exclaims, "Alas! that *he* should have perished at the time when all about him began to live!" The emotion that is evident here softens to some extent the earlier impression of extreme detachment.

Upon returning to Pau, Lefevre learned that the final departure of the family would be delayed for a week or two. He decided to put the time to advantage by continuing his exploration of the Pyrenees. In the middle of April he and the family left for Bordeaux via Tarbes, Auch and Agen. At the port city Lefevre took leave of the family, from whom he had received "every kindness," and embarked for England on the first of May.

The months spent as physician to Lord Selkirk were not to be the only unusual events in the life of George Lefevre. After returning to England (his own health apparently restored), he attempted without much success to begin a medical career there. He then travelled for nine years as physician to a Polish nobleman, spending five years in France and the rest of the time in Austria, Poland and Russia. When this period of service came to an end, he went to St. Petersburg, where he set up a private practice and became physician to the British Embassy. He was knighted for his services to the Embassy a few years later. During his stay in Russia he was placed in charge of a district during a cholera epidemic. This experience led to the publication of a work on the nature and treatment of cholera. After returning to London in 1842, he was admitted to the College of Physicians. In 1843 he brought out the memoirs from which we have been quoting, and in the years that followed he published several medical works. One of these, entitled *Advantages of Thermal Comfort,* draws on his Russian experience to advance his ideas on the treatment of invalids in a cold climate. He was inclined to melancholia, and on 12 February 1846 he killed himself by swallowing prussic acid in the home of a doctor friend.

There is nothing in Lefevre's memoirs to indicate how much interest he took in Selkirk's colonization projects and the bitter legal battles which undoubtedly shortened his patient's life. Preoccupied with his own career, he probably gave little thought in later years either to the development of the Canadian colonies or to the Earl's place in history. In fact, as the rehabilitation of Selkirk's reputation had scarcely begun when he published his *Life of a Travelling Physician,* it is unlikely that he had any idea at all of the long-term significance of his patient's work. Nor could he have imagined the importance his own memoirs would come to have for Canadian historians engaged in the study of Lord Selkirk. ♦

Hubert G. Mayes recently retired from the faculty of the University of Winnipeg. He now devotes much time to travel and writing.

THE PIRATES OF NEWFOUNDLAND

Two Against Spain

By Katherine Semple

"Why should I obey the orders of a King
When I'm a kind of a King myself?"

— Attributed to Peter Easton, archpirate of the Jacobean age, upon being offered a pardon by King James I of England.

On 24 June 1497 John Cabot planted the banner of St. George on the northern cape of Canada's "New-found-land". En route back to England he passed the Grand Banks, thereby making a second great discovery, the swarming shoals of cod which his crew caught simply by lowering baskets into the water. Word of this prolific fishing ground spread, eventually giving rise to a huge fish-curing industry nearby, prosperous enough to become a free port haven, and an ideal pirate retreat.

Until Jacobean times, certain forms of robbery at sea had been considered a respectable undertaking. "Letters of marque" issued by the sovereign permitted plunder and capture of enemy ships, particularly those of Spain. In the reign of Queen Elizabeth I this arrangement yielded an annual profit of close to 50 million in today's Canadian dollars, with a division of the spoils among the captains, the crews, the authorities and other interested parties.

Under James I all that changed. He cancelled letters of marque and drydocked the navy. England swarmed with unemployed seamen. Many sought employment fish-slitting on the shores of the "New-found-land". There they toiled until relief arrived in the guise of former English naval captains, gentlemen "turned pirate", looking for crews.

Two of the most notable men to arrive on Newfoundland's shores were Peter Easton, formerly one of Sir Walter Raleigh's valued captains, and Sir Henry Mainwaring, (pronounced Mannering), grandson of one William More, a Vice-Admiral of Sussex.

No portrait of Peter Easton is known to exist but he has been described as dark, athletic, and of medium height.

When King James terminated Easton's naval command, the young man turned to piracy and, by 1610, he was busy extracting tolls from Bristol shipping seeking re-entry to the Avon River. His forty-strong, well-equipped fleet became rather too successful and Bristol merchants, victims of his constant attentions, appealed to the authorities, who turned to Henry Mainwaring for help.

As a child, Henry Mainwaring's head had been filled with his grandfather's tales of the old Elizabethan seafaring days of Francis Drake and Raleigh. Finding himself caught in more sober Jacobean times the boy abandoned his dreams of the sea to apply himself to his studies. He matriculated from Brasenose College,

Bridgeman Art Library

A seventeenth century sea fight.

Oxford, at the age of 12 and won his B.A. 3 years later. He then plunged into law and, once accepted at the bar, underwent military service in the low countries. Then he returned to his true love, qualifying as a master mariner at the age of 23.

The brilliant Mainwaring was commissioned to put an end to Easton's activities, the king even offering some of the navy's drydocked ships for the task. Sadly, after seven years in storage, these hulks proved unseaworthy, so Mainwaring set about building anew at his own design and expense. Under the expert hands of a great shipwright, Phineas Pett, the *Resistance* took shape, described by Mainwaring as "small, beautiful, fast, and handy". Another, dearly loved ship of Mainwaring's design was his *Princess,* painted brilliant yellow and embellished with a riot of real gold leaf and shining brass and with guns capable of hitting a target half-a-mile distant.

Easton would have followed Mainwaring's preparations through intelligence from his patrons, the Killigrews. Ruling from Pendennis Castle in Cornwall, the Killigrews were financiers and brokers, offering safe haven and a spy service for privateers. Easton served as their principal agent at sea. The Newfoundland town of Kelligrews in Conception Bay continues their name.

As Mainwaring's preparations neared completion, Easton prudently withdrew from English waters to avoid a clash with his pursuer in England's "narrow seas". Such an encounter would be viewed, he knew, as treason. He moved his operations away from England completely, regrouping in Newfoundland. Public records describe his initial entry to Conception Bay in 1611. "Here [at Harbour Grace] Easton took from

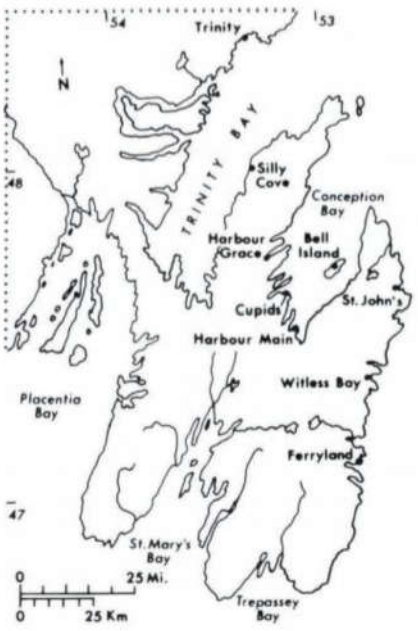
Pirates are shadowy figures on the stage of history and historians often disagree as to the facts of their careers. Much that has been written of pirates may be closer to legend than to history, but if we look carefully we may catch glimpses of them in action through the sea mists of time and come to know something of their story. Stories of piracy have become a part of the romance of the sea, but it seems certain that the life of a pirate was hard, brutal and often short. Two early seventeenth century pirates, Peter Easton and Sir Henry Mainwaring — who sailed for a time through what are now Canadian waters — seem to have been luckier than others.

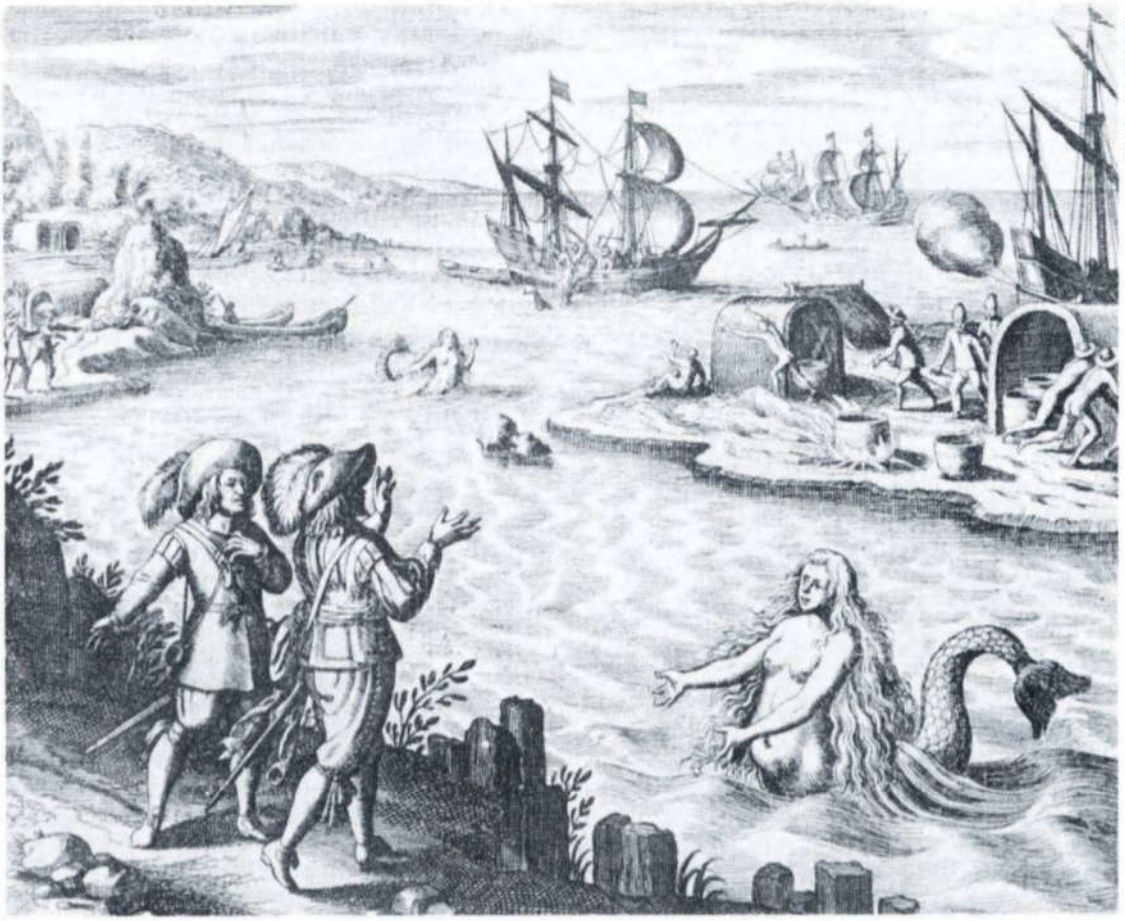
The romance of piracy: A fight to the death.

English ships 100 pieces of ordnance, victuals and munitions to the value of 10,400 pounds. From the French, 25 ships, from the Flemish one great ship and from the Portuguese 12 ships."

By now, the Newfoundland fisheries were employing close to ten thousand people. Island gossip had the newly-arrived Easton on Conception Bay murdering the settlers, burning forests, and committing almost every other imaginable crime. These are unlikely tales since, on 12 October 1612 we find members of the Cupids (Cuper's) Colony on Conception Bay entrusting him with 15 vital tons of curing salt, and other essentials for safe-keeping during their winter absence.

Not every Englishman shared the king's kindly view of Spain and Easton sailed for the Spanish colony at Puerto Rico. Succeeding where Drake failed, he seized the great fort of Moro Castle, carrying off its vast stockpiles of gold. Returning to Harbour Grace in triumph, he found his fort taken by the Basque fleet. A mighty battle ensued in which he lost forty-seven men but defeated the enemy. One Basque ship, the *San Malo,* foundered on a nearby islet, immediately christened "Easton's Isle" by local settlers, the name

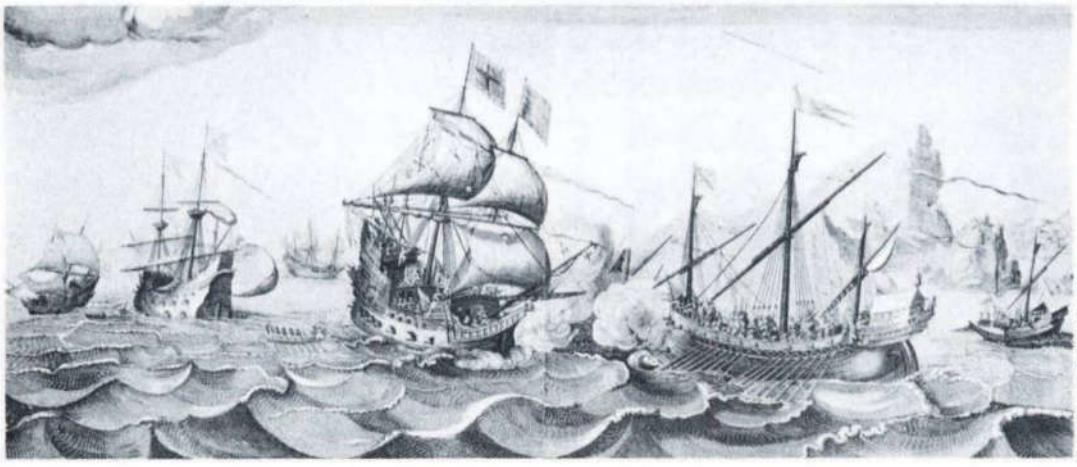




Macpherson Collection

Sir Richard Whitbourne makes an astonishing discovery at St. John's, Newfoundland, 1618.

Capture of a Spanish treasure galleon by three English vessels off Peru, 1628.



Macpherson Collection

being slowly corrupted to "Eastern Rock". Easton and his remaining men landed their treasure safely, burying their dead at nearby Bear Cove — now known as "The Pirates' Graveyard".

After this incident, Easton moved further round the headland to create a strong garrison at Ferryland. Once settled in, he built himself a fine house on nearby Fox Hill from which he continued to wage what now amounted to his own personal war with Spain.

Back in England, Sir Henry Mainwaring made ready, at last, to pursue Easton. Inquiring after his quarry at Easton's old employers, the Killigrews, he found his bird had flown. While pondering his next move, he met Sir Robert Shirley, an employee of the Shah of Persia. A notorious privateer, Shirley fatally awakened in Mainwaring all his long-dormant dreams of adventure. Mainwaring won a rare letter of marque from King James, permitting him to plunder Spanish shipping, though not in western waters. Delaying his pursuit of Easton, he set off on his new career.

Mainwaring set himself up in high style on the Barbary Coast of North Africa. A natural leader of men, he quickly brought the infamous Salee Pirates of the Barbary Coast under his sway only to set off wandering once more, in pursuit of fresh conquests. It was not until 1614 that he finally sailed for Newfoundland to search out Easton. The Cupids Colony chronicler records the scene as Mainwaring's fleet approached Harbour Grace: "Captain Maneringe with divers other captains arrived in Newfoundland on the 4th of June having eight sail of warlike ships."

Mainwaring carried out his arrival in the approved pirate fashion, with much noise and destruction. He attacked the French and Portuguese ships present in the harbour but also seems to have cut up some of the fishing boats caught in the fray.

When Mainwaring finally landed, did he now come face to face with his long-sought quarry? No one can tell for sure. Some chroniclers wistfully picture a meeting of the two pirates while others believe that Mainwaring arrived at Easton's fort only to find him away on a raid.

Certainly, in that same summer of 1614, Easton was preoccupied with the crowning enterprise of his career. Quite simply, he intended to capture the Spanish Plate Fleet with its invaluable cargo — a full twelvemonth's bounty wrested by Spain from its South American possessions and including a vast horde of gold.

Well-informed and well prepared, he positioned his ships in a wide arc to the south and the west of the Azores on either side of the route he knew his victims would take. Obligingly, the Spanish sailed straight into this net, delivering up a prize worth, perhaps, five hundred million of today's (Canadian) dollars. Easton had captured and kept one of the greatest pirate hauls in history. Better still, from his point of view, he had

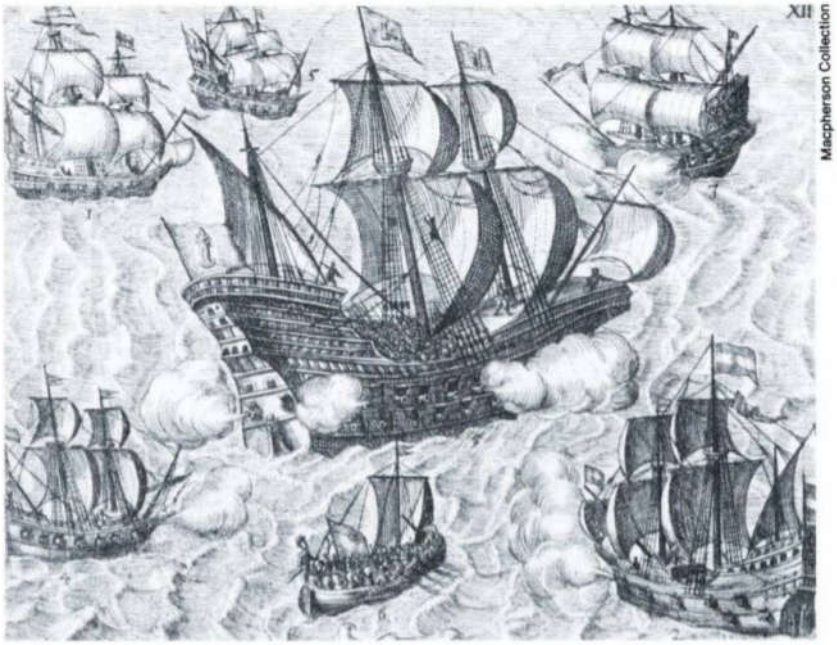
National Portrait Gallery

Queen Elizabeth I sent men like Drake and Raleigh to attack Spanish shipping. Her successor, James I, was less inclined to do so. The "Armada" portrait.

scored a great victory against Spain, an achievement that must have met with Mainwaring's approval.

Chronicler and colleague of both Easton and Mainwaring was Sir Richard Whitbourne, risen from the status of common whaler to become a prosperous merchant. Whitbourne collected a large fortune during his career, only to spend most of it between 1579-1619 in an unsuccessful attempt to colonize Newfoundland with Welshmen. In the process, he became unofficial governor of the area, bringing some semblance of order where Newfoundland's official colonizer, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, had so recently failed. Honoured by both the admiralty and the crown, Whitbourne presided over the first Overseas Court of Admiralty — convened at Trinity in 1615.

Whitbourne treated his two illustrious pirates gently. Both were men of breeding, which he was not. Both had strong support at court which, again, he did not. To capture the king's interest directly, Whitbourne dedicated his 1620 *Discourse and discovery of Newfound-land* to King James. This treatise encouraged a considerable number of settlers to the area as Whit-



Pirate ships move in for the kill, 1602.

bourne had hoped, although few of his beloved Welshmen cared to apply.

Despite his caution, Whitbourne seems to have preached to Easton on the sinfulness of piracy, exhorting him to see the error of his ways. Perhaps Easton heeded or, perhaps, having achieved his life's ambition, he simply felt ready to retire. Whatever the reason, he sent three different emissaries to King James requesting his pardon, furnishing each with a large bribe to pay for it. Two of the three petitioners succeeded in their errand with the result that Easton was twice-pardoned and the King twice-paid. In the event, Easton chose not to return to England but accepted, instead, the post of Master of Ordnance for the Duke of Savoy. The Mediterranean climate obviously suited him for he purchased a marquisate there and, marrying a local lady of noble birth, settled down to a long and respectable life.

And what became of the illustrious Mainwaring? He too was pardoned under the Great Seal of England on the grounds that "he had committed no great Wrong". The King took a strong fancy to the great privateer, appointing him a Gentleman of the Bedchamber, the better to enjoy his nautical gossip.

Boredom soon overtook the energetic seadog who finally eased himself away from the court in favour of writing and public duty. He became Deputy Warden of the Cinque Ports, Lieutenant of Dover Castle, and M.P. for Dover, all before he was thirty, going on to become a Vice-Admiral under the patronage of the Duke of Buckingham. Among other accomplishments he wrote England's first dictionary of seamanship "for the gentlemen captains of the day, very few of whom, though they be called seamen, do fully and wholly understand what belongs to their profession". Driven on by his restless, Elizabethan spirit, Mainwaring ultimately lost his great fortune defending the Crown against Cromwell so that, when he died old, all he possessed was a mere eight pounds, a few clothes and a horse.

Easton and Mainwaring were among the first and last of the great English gentlemen-pirates. As the Elizabethan naval traditions faded from memory, robbery at sea became more and more unprincipled, giving rise to the bloodthirsty characters glamorized in the eighteenth century and after. While Easton and Mainwaring sailed under the banner of St. George, their successors honoured only the skull and crossbones.

Born and bred from naval stock, both Easton and Mainwaring used the lives under their command with care, allowing good strategy and firepower to carry the day. Both were ruthless yet trusted, even liked, by their men. They stood in little fear of the mutinies that finished lesser captains. Abiding affection for Easton inspired many early settlers around Newfoundland's Conception Bay to adopt his name. In modern times, Canada has honoured him with an official memorial plaque installed at his old headquarters, Harbour Grace. As for Sir Henry, his only memorials are his dictionary and his reputation. He lies at rest in an English churchyard, St. Giles, Camberwell, in London, his battles long forgotten, his grave unmarked. ♦

Katherine Semple is a Toronto writer.

The Funny Money Man

By Trevor Lautens

BIBLE BILL
A Biography of William Aberhart.
By David R. Elliott and Iris Miller. Reidmore Books, Edmonton, 1988. 372 pp., illus. $17.95.

"Bible Bill" on the air.

British Columbia's image and self-image is so complacently one of political weirdness that it is good for the provincial as well as the national soul, especially for one who has long been in Vancouver city pent, to be reminded that you have to go to Alberta for the real odd fish. What can be made, for instance, of a premier who held the first meeting of his callow caucus at the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute? Chose, for occult reasons, a cabinet with the "perfect number", seven? Then explained to its members the numerological significance of their names — which moved some of them to seek licence plates bearing their "number"? And, for that matter, whose election campaign included the prayer "O God, give us a foretaste of thy celestial reign," and who later asserted that Social Credit was "an economic system from God himself"?

Heavenly would not seem to be the appropriate adjective to describe the earthly jurisdiction of William Aberhart. Indeed readers of this book, which plugs away at the Aberhart phenomenon so painstakingly that it has the fascination of a first-class police report into a really juicy crime, should keep a constant corrective in mind as a reproach to the condescending impulse to smirk or guffaw: Alberta was devastated in the 1930s, not only by the Depression that afflicted all Canadians but by every combination of drought, hail, and plague of grasshoppers that could bring its people to a level of despair and poverty hardly imaginable by succeeding generations. William Aberhart did not have the answers. And nobody else did.

To their credit, David R. Elliott, who teaches history at the University of Alberta, and Iris Miller, who contributed interviews beginning in the 1950s in Canada and Britain about Aberhart and the early Social Credit movement, neither patronize their subject matter, "popularize" it, nor offer much exegitical blather about it. They are primarily fact-gatherers, not theorizers. This is appropriate for a study of an under-examined man whose premiership (1935-1943) is passing beyond living memory. A modest criticism is that they tell little about Aberhart's personal life in maturity — his wife, Jesse, is revealed as having an unbecomingly showy and extravagant streak, but otherwise hardly appears, and his daughters, whom he visited often in Vancouver, are inexplicably absent from the index.

William Aberhart was born in 1878 in rural Perth County, Ontario, into a moderately prosperous and perhaps immoderately dull farm

family. Early on he showed some ability, especially for penmanship, mathematics, and absorption of facts, say the authors, but never developed the skill of inductive reasoning. He took teacher training in Hamilton, rose to a principalship in Brantford, and in 1910 was lured west by the Calgary School Board. He spent most of his working life as principal of Calgary's Crescent Heights High School.

His formal work, however, seems to have always been subsumed by his larger mission as indefatigable lay preacher, tireless organizer of religious instruction classes, and voluble promoter of religious *isms*. The book is very good on his interest in such now-obscure theories as dispensationalism and on the hot controversies between modernism and fundamentalism in the Protestant churches. Aberhart had unbelievable energy and a kind of beaming enthusiasm that swept other people along. He was a great one for making bizarre and colourful charts that purported to show how God had arranged things. He may have been doing God's work, but by the lights of today's secularism, which also has its fatuities, he looks like God's bore.

The writers detail all this with great care and not unsympathetically, but it is evident that underneath the veneer there was a prime manipulator of congregational politics with a great talent for making himself the indispensable man without nominally being in charge. It is astonishing to read that he got free space for his Bible classes at Westbourne Baptist Church and gradually dominated it to the point of total control — "all this without becoming an ordained minister, or even a deacon or member of the church; he was not even a Baptist." He had a deft hand for the technique of resignation from this and that, which allowed him to graciously accede to importunings to have him back, more powerful than ever.

The great political thrust began with his creation of the Calgary Prophetic Bible Institute and the famous Sunday broadcasts, which reached 300,000 listeners — more than Jack Benny, say the authors (meaning, surely, in the same area). As the Depression deepened, Aberhart became less interested in the abstractions of heaven and more in the palpable sufferings on earth, and the Social Credit theories of the British engineer Major C. H. Douglas came to him as powerful revelation. He became a devoted disciple — though when they met, the master, a man whose arrogance transcended even his ignorance, treated him coldly.

Essentially, Douglas saw a towering flaw in capitalism: there was a chronic lack of purchasing power built into the system. His A plus B theory seemed to prove that the worker's wage —"A" — could not pay for the very product he produced, when "B" — profit, overhead, and especially finance charges, the main villain — were added to "A". The creation of the lifeblood of economic activity, credit, was in the hands of bankers, who could produce it with a stroke of the pen, instead of being held socially (thus "social credit"). A government with appropriate powers, run with the help of properly trained experts, could bridge the gap — so obvious in the Depression — between the undoubted ability and willingness of producers to produce and the unquestioned enthusiasm of consumers to consume.

It took skill, mostly the skill of evasion, for Aberhart to sell this theory or his mutant of it to Alberta farmers, who were both despairing producers and despairing consumers. Sell it he did.

It is a fine irony that Aberhart's first public insinuation of Douglas's theories into his religious broadcasts began in August 1932, exactly when the movement that became the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation was also aborning. The two, both populist children of the Depression scornful of conventional capitalism, played a little footsie early on. (Even more surprising is communism's friendliness; the Rev. Hewlett Johnson, the "Red Dean of Canterbury", was an early Social Credit enthusiast, and "Hilly" Hill a friend and adviser, was — probably unknown to Aberhart — a Communist.) Within three years Aberhart was premier, the governing United Farmers of Alberta stripped of every seat in the legislature.

Aberhart's career is full of jaw-droppers. He won an election in which he did not run. (A subsequent by-election provided him with a seat.) He presided over a legislature in which he did not speak. It seems unbelievable that this career nonstop talker gave his maiden speech to the Alberta house three and a half years after he became premier. These feats echoed his earlier control over congregations that he held in the palm of his hand without formally holding office over them. To an astonishing and literal degree he was a lifelong outsider.

Such men often are more successful winning power than wielding it. Aberhart's premiership, from 1935 to 1943, was disastrous. One of the main attractions of the Social Credit platform, the social dividend that he had promised, which led Albertans to believe that they would get $25 a month from the government, came to predictable grief. In 1936 Alberta issued "Prosperity

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Certificates" — the "funny money" of legend. To remain valid, a one-cent Alberta stamp had to be affixed to the $1 certificates every week. Citizens were urged to use them as legal tender. But neither the banks nor the government itself would accept them. The scheme collapsed.

Social Credit legislation — one lot included acts requiring banks to be provincially licensed and controlled by a directorate named by the Social Credit Board, denied all bank employees access to the courts, and forbade any court action over the constitutionality of legislature enactments — was flagrantly *ultra vires* and was disallowed by the federal government. Two Social Crediters, one a lieutenant of Major Douglas sent over among the technicians who would make all things whole, went to jail for defamatory libel. Schism rocked both the movement and the party; Aberhart forced out the cabinet's only sophisticated member, Attorney-General John Hugill, whose duties Aberhart absurdly assumed along with the education portfolio. He fought with the lieutenant-governor, civil libertarians, the press — Alberta's major daily and some 90 weekly papers were jointly awarded the 1938 Pulitzer Prize for their opposition to his government, and the superb *Calgary Herald* cartoons of Stewart Cameron, who had worked for Walt Disney, caught Aberhart in all his pot-bellied, fat-lipped pomposity. The *mot juste* ironically belonged to the president of the Canadian Fascist League: Aberhart, he said, was a fascist, but "through certain religious quirks hasn't got around to realizing it."

There was much more, and it seems remarkable that Social Credit won re-election in 1940, though it lost 20 seats and its share of the popular vote fell from 54 to 43 per cent. When war broke out Aberhart was ambiguously critical of both sides but later was strongly pro-British, perhaps because of a growing interest in British-Israelism, and to his credit he denounced the ever more open anti-Semitism of Douglas and some other Social Crediters. But his energies notably flagged in his second term, and he died — of cirrhosis of the liver, usually associated with alcoholism, yet another irony — on a visit with his Vancouver daughters in 1943.

There was even posthumous irony. The family chose to bury this grand outsider on the West Coast because they felt Alberta had not appreciated him. And the prosperity that William Aberhart had honestly sought for his province finally arrived just four years later, not on the wings of ideology but of oil.

Trevor Lautens is a Vancouver writer and editor.

A Matter of Perspective

By J.M. Bumsted

In 1824, Samuel Black journeyed into the northern reaches of the British Columbia interior, becoming one of the first Europeans to view the landscape of this region and certainly the first to attempt to describe it in detail. At one point he wrote:

> In a fine evening from the top of the hill we have something here of a fine prospect ending in a vast & unbounded extent. The flat woody borders of the valley penetrating the lake in alternate points contrasted with the opening Lake, & the Eye devested of the Rugged black Rocks & the undetermined snowy shades & the somber shade of night casting its thin Mantle over light & shade & lastly the serene harmony of the whole may approach the beautiful & sublime, but raise the Eye to the bold features of the black Rugged Rocky cliffs & crags rising over this terrific end of the Lake resembling huge masses of majestic shade contrasted with the Gloomy Hollow & deep blue expance of the Lake & we have a true resemblance of the Grand & Terrific.

In the midst of some of the most spectacular and rugged vistas in the world, the observer employs the only aesthetic vocabulary he has at his disposal for such occasions, although he realizes that it is somehow inappropriate. Nevertheless, Black manages to make his landscape sound more like the Lake District of England than the North of Canada, not surprising since his perspective is Wordsworthian. The same dynamics are in effect for historians as for early travellers. Historical study is blinkered by vocabulary and point-of-view, and often revisionism comes less through the discovery of new evidence than from the investigation of old evidence with new eyes. In the books herein reviewed, perspective plays an important role.

Certainly no field of study offers a better illustration of the dynamics of changing perspectives than that of the fur trade in North America. In *Le Castor Fait Tout*, subtitled "Selected Papers of the Fifth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1985" — from which I got the opening quotation by Samuel Black in a fascinating article by Ian MacLaren entitled "Literary Landscapes in the Writings of Fur Traders" — the continuing nature of revisionism is quite evident. Studies of the fur trade once upon a time mentioned the native peoples only in passing; Harold Innis's classic analysis treats the natives as the collectors of the furs, but such collection was somehow outside of and beneath what was really important. Over the past twenty years, European-native rela-

tions and native adaptations have become the major themes of fur trade study, a fact clearly reflected in *Le Castor Fait Tout*. As a result, the articles on these themes in the book, however well done is the research and writing, are for the most part no longer at the cutting edge of the field. One can see the next generation of revisionism well represented here, however, in those who are re-examining the European side of the trade in the light of new developments in other fields, especially literary analysis. As several articles here suggest, the fur trade journals that have long served as a basic source for understanding the traditional themes can be reinterpreted in a variety of fascinating ways. In what is the most stunning article in a very lengthy book, Mary-Black Rogers reinvestigates fur trade journals of the subarctic fur trade from a semiotic perspective, focussing on the use of the term "starving". Although the journals are written in English, she points out, there is a special fur trade vocabulary employed for such words as "starving", and she appends an incipient glossary of such terminology to her analysis. The journals, we thus discover, are written within the intellectual and aesthetic context of their time, but also from a shared specialist perspective. Both these insights should produce much reinterpretation of the vast corpus of fur trade writing regarded at present as only of historical or ethnohistorical value. The physical book itself, I regret to report, is one of the most primitive examples of desk-top publishing I have seen recently.

Scholarship does not stand still, and works with exciting new perspectives are often rapidly superseded. Such is the case with James Parker's *Emporium of the North: Fort Chipewyan and the Fur Trade to 1835*. Originally written as a master's thesis at the University of Alberta a generation ago and long regarded as a classic in the field of fur trade study, *Emporium of the North* has finally been published. Unfortunately, fur trade scholarship has moved far beyond the political economy of Harold Innis over the past twenty years, and Parker's study of Fort Chipewyan, essentially done from the point-of-view of the European fur traders, seems vaguely old-fashioned today. Parker did manage to get well beyond the notion that the fur trade was a purely European commercial enterprise, and there are a number of useful charts and tables dealing with the trade at Fort Chipewyan. A short bibliographical update by Patricia A. Myers, "The Literature of Fur Trade History Since 1967," appended to the text is regrettably no substitute for a thorough reworking of its contents, however, and the book becomes an artifact as much as a contribution to fur trade scholarship.

On the other hand, J. F. Bosher's *The Canada Merchants 1713-1763* does provide a new perspective on the early history of Canada, particularly in an occasionally acerbic introductory chapter. Bosher wants to come at Canadian colonial history from the metropolis rather than from later Canada. He points out that most historians of New France treat the colony "as though it were already a separate sovereign country," adding that "Whatever seems distinctively Canadian floats to the top of the Canadian historian's mind; whatever seems distinctly French or European sinks like the dregs to the bottom" (p. 4). Bosher wishes to emphasize the French origins of New France, which is certainly legitimate. In Bosher's hands, however, the object of the exercise seems inextricably interwoven with some private vendetta he wishes to carry on against Canadian history as usually written — and against Canadian historians. Thus "the history of New France seen from a Canadian national standpoint is not unlike the history of Brittany or Gascony apart from the rest of France. That is, it has a character and charm of its own but lacks both depth and breadth, like any provincial history" (p. 9). However

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LE CASTOR FAIT TOUT
Selected Papers of the Fifth North American Fur Trade Conference

Edited by Bruce Trigger, Toby Morantz, Louise Dechene. Lake St. Louis Historical Society, Montreal, 1987. 654 pp. $19.85.

EMPORIUM OF THE NORTH
Fort Chipewyan and the Fur Trade to 1835

By James Parker. Alberta Culture and Multiculturalism/Canadian Plains Research Centre, Regina, 1987. 208 pp., illus. $15.00.

THE CANADA MERCHANTS 1713-1763

By J.F. Bosher. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1987. 234 pp., illus. $59.95.

CANADIAN PAPERS IN RURAL HISTORY VOL. VI

Edited by Donald Akenson. Langdale Press, Gananoque, Ontario, 1988. 353 pp., $35.00.

IRISH MIGRANTS IN THE CANADAS
A New Approach

By Bruce S. Elliott. McGill/Queen's University Press, Kingston and Montreal, 1988. 370 pp., illus. $35.00.

A HISTORY OF MUSIC IN CANADA 1534-1914

By Helmut Kallmann. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1987. 317 pp. $16.95 paper.

DISTANT NEIGHBOURS
A Comparative History of Seattle and Vancouver

By Norbert MacDonald. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1987. 259 pp., illus. $29.95.

OVERLAND TO STARVATION COVE
With the Inuit in Search of Franklin 1878-1880

By Heinrich Klutschak, edited and translated by William Barr. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1987. 261 pp., illus. $24.95.

accurate are Bosher's barbs, his subject matter does not assist his case very much. The metropolitan perspective arguably demotes the Canadian merchant class into petty provincials operating overseas, but it does not much alter our picture of them. Most of the detailed analysis provided by Bosher in the ensuing chapters implicitly engages a non-Canadian historiography. In the end, one is struck more by windmills Bosher doesn't tilt against than the ones he does confront, and one suspects that this work is probably more important to French history than it is to Canadian. Certainly the pricing of this book reflects a non-Canadian dimension, since it lists at more than twice the price of a comparable domestic publication.

A more important version of a European perspective on early Canadian history may be found in a lengthy essay by Roberta Hamilton, entitled "Feudal Society and Colonization: A Critique and Reinterpretation of the Historiography of New France," published in volume VI of *Canadian Papers in Rural History*. The volume itself is an interesting example of a fairly unusual type of academic publication in Canada, for it is not a journal but an annual devoted to a particular (and relatively neglected) subject in modern scholarship. The papers published in these volumes range over a great gamut of subject material and are not confined to Canadian topics. They are not always convincing, but they are uniformly stimulating.

The Hamilton piece, too long for a conventional journal and probably not lengthy enough for publication as a separate book, is ideally suited for such a format. It would, indeed, have trouble finding another outlet for publication in its present form. Readers will find in "Feudal Society and Colonization" a useful analysis of the writing of early French-Canadian history combined with a useful corrective to much of the exceptionalism of that scholarship. Hamilton has really two new perspectives to bring to the study of early French Canada. One is a Marxist point-of-view, and the other is an insistence on an understanding of the European origins of the French colonial enterprise in America. While the two perspectives are interwoven in this study, it is possible to separate them to some extent. Whether one agrees with her assertion that New France was a feudal society (in the Marxist sense of the term), one must be impressed with the arguments that too much of the history of early French Canada has paid little attention to European background and has made comparisons between the French and British colonies in North America in what amounts to a vacuum. The essay places the historiography of New France within the context of recent scholarship on the *Ancien Regime* in an extremely useful and provocative way. While it is good to see such stimulating work appearing in print, one can but suspect that the essay will not receive the attention it deserves outside the narrowest of specialist journals.

Pushing the roots of Canadian history back into their European origins also characterizes Bruce S. Elliott's *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach*. Like most areas of Canadian study, immigration history has long been characterized by a curious lack of concern with the detailed background of the new arrivals. Blanket generalizations have been made about the "Old World Origins", and then the focus has been on the "successful" adaptation of the immigrants to the "New World Environment". Scholars of immigration to Canada have in recent years begun extending their concentration on background, and in this study, Elliott follows this direction to its logical conclusion, tracing the movements of 775 Irish families who came to Canada in the first half of the nineteenth century from County Tipperary. He not only takes his subjects back to Ireland, but pursues them beyond their initial arrival as they migrate within the new country. What he demonstrates is the importance of kinship patterns and overall strategies of land acquisition within families for explaining both immigration and subsequent migration patterns. While this book is an important one, it is also a fairly tedious one to read. The author's overall generalizations and conclusions require the detailed evidence that he provides, but few readers will find the plethora of material terribly enthralling. Nevertheless, if one wishes to understand not only Irish patterns of movement to and within Canada, but general patterns in the nineteenth century, this book is essential.

Helmut Kallmann's *A History of Music in Canada 1534-1914* was originally published in 1960, and now makes its appearance in a paperback edition. Full of interesting material on a subject long neglected in Canadian cultural studies, the work is unfortunately now terribly dated. The problem is, of course, one of perspective. Like most of his generation of students of Canadian culture, Kallmann was entrapped by the artificial distinctions between high and folk, between art and pop. Given his further assumption that the Canadian frontier was not conducive to high culture, the result is a work that appears pleasantly surprised whenever it finds any evidence of high-quality "classical" music being taught, performed, or written, and spends too much time apologizing for what is not present in the musical life of the country. In fairness to Kallmann, he recognizes the importance and vitality of the folk and popular traditions in Canada at the same time that he is unable to escape the feeling that these are somehow outside the mainstream of his analysis. If we never learn enough about what was exciting about the Canadian musical tradition — and far too much about the dull imitation of European performance techniques — we also never find out very much from this book about the composition of music in Canada. Given his preconceptions, it is perhaps not surprising that Kallmann does not appear to have examined very carefully the output of a number of early Canadian composers. They should not have existed, they could not be very good. But in this era of the discovery (or rediscovery) of some very decent musical writing among what has been hitherto regarded as the "second-rate",

surely some of this Canadian output deserves more attention than has been herein evidenced. Kallmann suggests that the music exists, and our musicians could certainly do with some additions to their repertoires.

Comparative history is yet another way of getting a new frame of reference for the commonplace, by providing a context from a totally different historical universe. The conventions governing comparative study are not very clearly defined, particularly in terms of choosing the subjects for comparison, and the genre presents certain problems. One is the frequent artificiality of the subjects compared. Another is the infrequency with which scholars are truly experts in both comparative contexts. What so often emerges is a study ostensibly comparative which really is not. *Distant Neighbours: A Comparative History of Seattle and Vancouver* by Norbert MacDonald, avoids the common pitfalls. The subjects are cities on either side of the 49th parallel that have been historic rivals and have much in common. The author clearly understands both cities and the national contexts in which each functions.

The result is a good and useful book. But not a great one. The problem, I think, is the restraint of scholarship on the part of the author. Surely one of the major functions for comparative history is to show that the superficially similar are really quite different when one investigates context, and that the differences reflect something quite important. Although ostensibly about Seattle and Vancouver, I had hoped that this book would offer some illumination on the differences between the United States and Canada. Regrettably, the author stops short of providing any explicit commentary on Canadian-American differences, producing instead tantalizing points of comparison that fairly cry out for explication. Thus, MacDonald observes as a conclusion to his opening chapter, "although original settlement was similar and private initiative was dominant, public authorities played a much bigger role in the Canadian setting than in the American one" (p. 19). And he leaves it there. In his concluding remarks, the author returns to the theme, noting:

> It is true that both cities reveal a whole range of behavior and values. But whereas Vancouver has shown a definite leftward tilt toward the public-rights side of the spectrum, Seattle clearly tends toward the right with its emphasis on private needs and individual responsibility. There are numerous exceptions and contradictions to this pattern, but the basic distinction holds (p. 201).

In fairness to MacDonald, he has made such differences a major if subtle theme in the book. Perhaps he is right that why Vancouver's "greater awareness of public needs and public rights" has "been sustained in the Canadian setting" is hardly "easily answered" (p. 203). But this reader, at least, would have preferred some more sustained discussion of this question, which is for the author obviously an abstract afterthought to the main event.

New perspectives are not always recognized at the time, and subsequent fashions in scholarship can often bring new life to a documentary source. Such is the case with Heinrich Klutschak's *Overland to Starvation Cove: With the Inuit in Search of Franklin 1878-1880.* Heinrich Wenzl Klutschak was a member of an arctic expedition led by Lieutenant Frederick Schwatka of the United States Cavalry which set out in search of new information about the Franklin expedition in the late 1870s. Although Klutschak was born in Prague and published his contemporary account of the expedition in German, the venture itself was a thoroughly American one led by a third-generation American educated at West Point. Underfinanced in comparison with other ventures pursuing the fate of Franklin, the Schwatka expedition was forced to rely far more heavily on the Inuit and Inuit technology, conducting all of its arctic travel overland by dog sled. Finding little new about Franklin or his men, since confirming the importance of Inuit oral tradition was not at the time regarded as very significant, the expedition was never regarded as more than a minor footnote in arctic exploration. Some skeletons and relics from the Franklin party were discovered, and the 5,200 kilometre overland journey by sled (the longest undertaken by white men to that point) occasionally remembered. But Klutschak's account of the expedition, published in Germany in 1881, remained an obscure source in arctic exploration until our own era, when its value suddenly shifted upwards.

The key to the enhanced importance of Heinrich Klutschak's account lay less in the revival of scholarly interest in arctic exploration — although such a revival has occurred, and the reasons for it deserve to be explored in some detail — than in the recent attention being paid to native peoples. In terms of its Franklin focus, the Schwatka expedition was an abysmal failure. But in terms of its opportunity for observation of the Inuit in their everyday life over long periods of time, it was a potential winner. For both financial and scientific reasons, Schwatka had determined that, rather than pursuing Franklin in the ways of previous parties, his group would come to the Arctic overland from Hudson Bay. Inevitably such a plan meant not only receiving the co-operation of the Inuit, but living with them for long periods of time. Unlike Franklin's men whom it sought, the Schwatka party understood that survival in the Arctic meant the total adoption of Inuit

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ways. The four white men of the expedition spent nearly two years living and travelling with the Inuit, and *Overland to Starvation Cove* is a trained journalist's account of that adventure.

The party could not have managed this total immersion into Inuit life had its members entertained the typical European attitudes — even the advanced ones of its day — toward native culture. Forced to adapt himself totally to Inuit ways for a protracted period of time, Klutschak had both an unusual opportunity to observe the culture and an even more distinctive reason than most observers for appreciating its functionality. The result is a remarkably useful account of Inuit culture in the last years of the nineteenth century, relatively free from most of the worst effects of European ethnocentrism both positive and negative. The book is a gem, and editor and translator William Barr must be thanked for making it available to us in a splendid English edition.

Historicism — the idea that all culture is bound by time and place — has long been one of the principal *bêtes noires* of conservative philosophers and commentators who appreciate the profound implications of a view of culture that does not concentrate on its universal properties. One of the chief victims of historicist thinking, of course, is the concept of objectivity. The writing of history has itself been profoundly altered by historicist attitudes — as well as by scholarly trends and fashions — and readers would do well to keep such points in mind.

J. M. Bumsted is Professor of History at St. John's College, University of Manitoba.

THE PACKET

Letters, Notes and Opinion

The Last Voyage of the Bayeskimo

The article "Not By Seals Alone", [*The Beaver,* February/March 1988] dealing with the activities of the Moravian Missions on the coast of Labrador included a photograph of the three-masted barque *Harmony*. It was this picture that triggered off memories of days long ago when a successor of that *Harmony,* also named *Harmony* and the last one of her line, became linked with the fatal last voyage of the Hudson's Bay Company's supply ship *Bayeskimo* in 1925.

I was Chief Officer on *Bayeskimo* when she sailed from Montreal in July 1925 for the Company's posts. All went well until we met very heavy ice conditions in Gray Strait at the northernmost tip of Labrador. We were carried to and fro in the merciless grip of the pack which was activated by fierce currents that run through that strait.

At one point with engines at "full-ahead" we were swept stern first amongst the grinding ice floes with the result that our steer-gear was completely put out of action when the rudder blade struck an exceptionally heavy ice floe and the entire steering system was wrecked.

We took stock of the damage and while engaged in that task the Company's ship *Nascopie* hove into sight slowly forcing her way through the pack and manoeuvered to within close distance of the crippled *Bayeskimo*. Between the two ships it was agreed that *Nascopie* would endeavour to tow us into Port Burwell harbour. To this end a stout steel hawser was made fast between the two vessels and towing commenced, but as we were unable to steer a straight course in *Nascopie*'s wake we just cannoned from side to side against the floes until the strain on the steel hawser became so great that it parted with a loud bang. That finished any further attempt at towing. Meanwhile the ship's engineers had patched up the defective steering gear and we were now able to proceed at very slow speed towards Port Burwell which we finally reached on 20 July.

While landing the supplies for the post, more effective repairs to the steering gear were carried out and on 22 July we steamed out of Port Burwell into Ungava Bay bound for Fort Chimo.

That year, 1925, was one of the worst years for ice conditions and we had to hammer away hour by hour to make any progress at all through the very heavy pack-ice. On 23 July we were completely caught in a huge field of ice in which we were being gradually crushed. *Bayeskimo* began to fill with water and ere long we realised that it was now only a matter of time to giving the order to abandon ship. Meanwhile the entire crew was busy getting the passengers on to the ice. Lifeboats were lowered on to the ice and dragged clear, also items of food and clothing. We fought all day to try and save the ship, but to no avail. Ralph Parsons [later Fur Trade Commissioner] decreed that there were not to be any heroics and so when late in the day the fore deck of *Bayeskimo* was beneath the ice

and up to the front of the bridge the ship was finally abandoned. The sun was setting over the ragged edge of the ice-field when the entire company of crew and passengers saw *Bayeskimo* suddenly stand on end the ensign waving at the stern as she plunged beneath the ice with a resounding roar. It was a tomb indeed, the ice closed over the spot and where moments before there had been a ship there was now just ice. During all this we had alerted *Nascopie* by wireless of what was happening and it was she that finally rescued us all from our icy dilemma. In her we were taken back to Port Burwell where it was decided that we should live in what had once been the Moravian Mission Church. Here we took up our abode with what meagre supplies *Nascopie* could spare as she still had a full itinerary to complete. Ralph Parsons arranged that Captain [John] Lloyd of *Bayeskimo* should take the large power launch *Pitseolak* carried aboard *Nascopie* and travel south along the coast of Labrador calling at the settlements until contact could be made with a ship to carry him to St. John's, Newfoundland. I was now in charge of the crew and of course we were all wondering how long it would be before we were rescued and carried back to civilization. Food was confined to hard ship's biscuits, sea gulls and seals and it was not long before the crew were complaining to me about their lives in general, as though I could do anything about it.

The days came and went. Each day I climbed to a high lookout position and on 14 August my vigils were rewarded. I sighted an auxiliary barque under sail and steam coming in from seaward. It did not take me long to recognize her as our old friend *Harmony* and shortly after she came to anchor in Port Burwell harbour.

I was soon aboard her. Captain J.C. Jackson was in command. (It was quite a joke along Labrador that the Captain of a mission ship should have such appropriate initials), 'nuff said.

He informed me that he had been sent here specifically to give us all passage to St. John's, Newfoundland, and that the crew would have to put up with makeshift quarters. In fact they would have to live in one of the holds. So the next morning I sent a squad of men off to the *Harmony* to make the necessary preparations. Plans were laid down on the floor of the hold over which was spread a layer of deer skins. It was all very crude, but circumstances were such that beggars could not be choosers.

It was decided that *Harmony* would sail at day-break on 18 August and I therefore arranged for all my men to be ready to board as soon after five o'clock that morning as possible. Well they were called, they had what went by the name of breakfast and then suddenly they all refused to go aboard *Harmony*, their reason being that the accommodation was not to their liking and that they had decided among themselves to remain at Port Burwell until the Hudson's Bay Company sent a ship which could provide better living quarters. I reasoned with them, as did Captain Jackson and still they were adamant in their refusal. I told them that the deadline was 8 a.m. at which time I intended to proceed on board *Harmony*. If they elected to remain I certainly had no intention of doing so. The time passed, there were small gatherings of men, all discussing, I supposed, whether to go or remain. Just before the deadline was due to expire I made toward the boats which were assembled by the shore in readiness to take us off. I said good-bye to Corporal Nicholls of the RCMP and the assembled crowd of Eskimos who had gathered, then stepped into one of the boats. Still no sign of a move from the men. "Cast off" I ordered and before my boat was half way to *Harmony* there was a concerted stampede as the entire crew took to the remaining boats. Such was their eagerness that they arrived alongside and boarded before I did. Within an hour the anchor was aweigh and *Harmony* under sail slipped away from Port Burwell with probably the strangest cargo on board that she had ever carried. Outside a stiff north-westerly wind filled her sails and we arrived at St. John's, Newfoundland, on the 25 August 1925. I was given VIP treatment in that Captain Jackson let me share his quarters with him.

In 1927 when the Hudson's Bay Company took over the Moravian Mission stations *Harmony* was included in the deal. As a ship she could no longer fulfill any useful purpose and so after completing her 1926 voyage to Labrador she was ordered to Ardrossan, Ayrshire, Scotland where she arrived in February, 1927 and was moored alongside *Nascopie* and *Bayrupert*, very good company indeed, but not for long. The Hudson's Bay Company sold her to Smith and Houston, Shipbreakers, Port Glasgow, and there on the banks of the River Clyde she came to journey's end.

Captain F.W. Berchem,
HBC 1916-1931,
Saltcoats, Ayrshire,
Scotland.

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All the Information that Fits

I write in reference to Dr. Keith Ralston's observations in his review of James R. Gibson's *Farming the Frontier, The Agricultural Opening of the Oregon Country, 1786-1846* [*The Beaver,* August/September 1987].

In preparing our "Pacific Northwest" supplement map for the Making Of America series, my staff made use of numerous sources of information, including Professor Gibson's excellent book.

Given the amount of space available for the two insets with which Dr. Ralston finds fault (each is about six inches by six, with 23 lines of text in columns of less than three inches), it was inevitable that much information simply could not be included.

I believe that few would disagree with the contention that the fur trade was the driving force in the political and economic development of the Pacific Northwest in the period of our first map inset, circa 1500-1850. Contrary to what Dr. Ralston claims, we make no assertion that agriculture developed "only in the next period of 'Conquest and colonization' from 1850 to 1880". In fact, the text for the first inset concludes with the statement that "American farmers streamed into the Willamette Valley in the 1840s." This was a major migration, which had a great impact on the subsequent development of the region, and we felt that we could not omit it. It is unfortunate that, having decided to emphasize the fur trade on the first map, it was impossible to describe George Simpson's efforts, in the 1820s, to make HBC posts self-sufficient in staples.

I am pleased to report that the Making Of America has been a resounding success with our more than forty million readers and that many professional geographers have applauded this effort by the Society to provide the general reader with a lively and informative historical-geographical survey of the U.S. I am proud of the series and would like to thank Dr. Ralston for his complimentary reference to the *National Geographic* as a "great popular educator". That is indeed our mission.

John B. Garver, Jr.,
Senior Assistant Editor,
and Chief Cartographer,
National Geographic Society,
Washington, D.C.

Scotland and the HBC

Permit me to add a postscript to Jennifer S.H. Brown's interesting article "A Parcel of Upstart Scotchmen" [*The Beaver,* February/March 1988].

When Peter Newman came to interview me in the course of his research for his Hudson's Bay Company history he opened with these words: "Like me, Mr. Links, I believe you are a Jew. Did you not find a prejudice against you when you joined the Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company?"

"Of course not," I was able to assure him, "neither there nor anywhere else in my life. But perhaps I should point out that I was not only the only Jewish director of the Company: I was the only English one, all the rest being Scots. I cannot acquit my colleagues altogether of prejudice."

This was in 1946.

J.G. Links,
London, England.

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Read these and other fascinating articles and reviews in the October/November 1988 issue of **The Beaver.**

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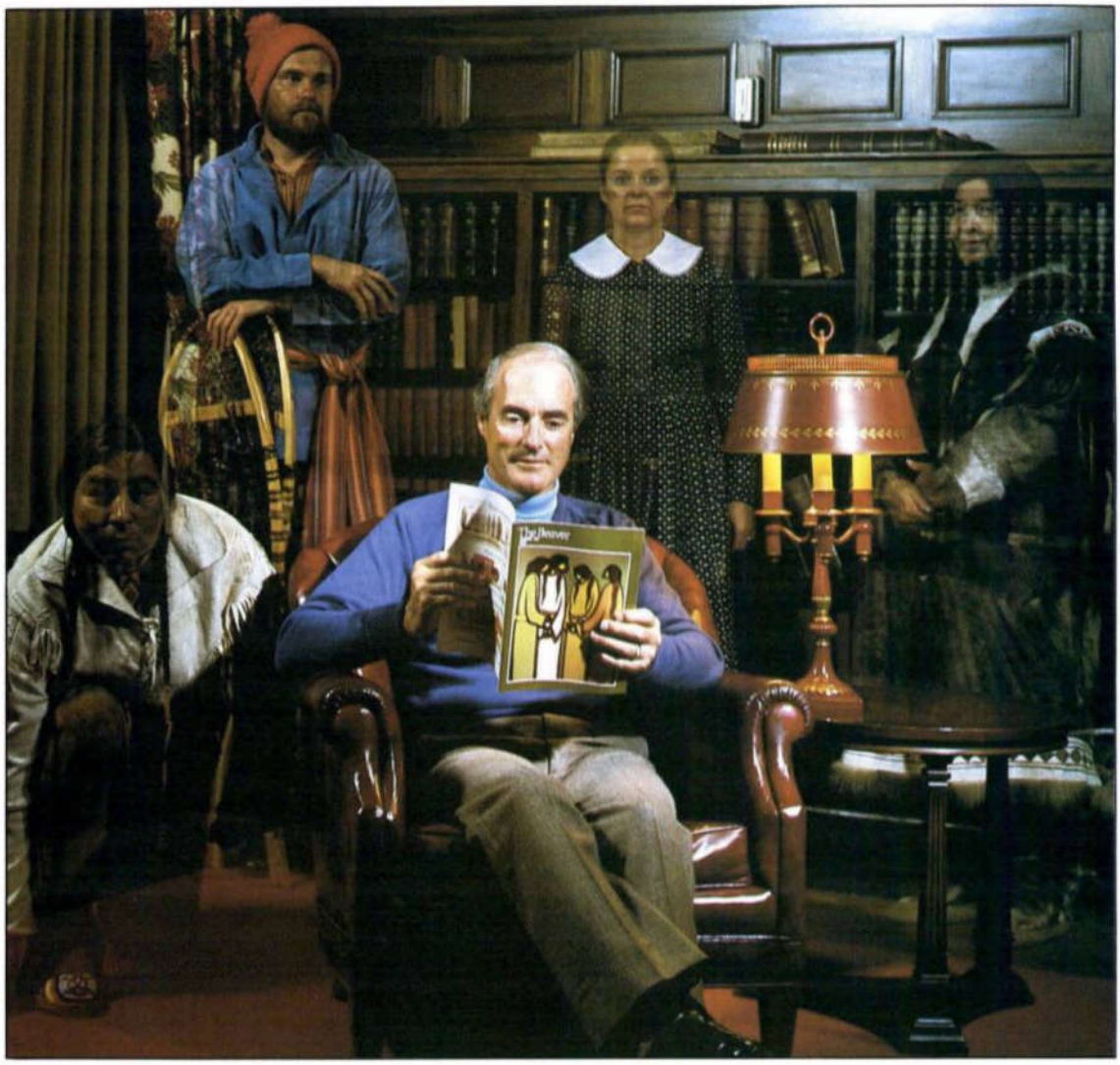

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